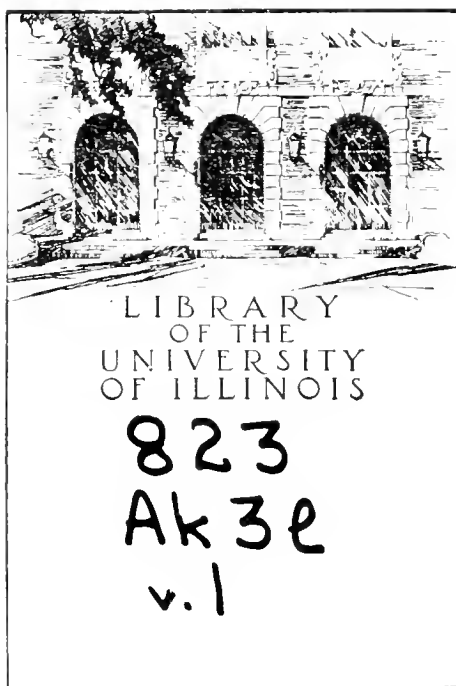


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LONDON LEGENDS.



VOL. I.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.



LONDON.

Richard Pinder, 10, BURLINGTON STREET, NEW YORK.



LONDON LEGENDS.

BY PAUL PINDAR, GENT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1842.

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TO

THE LORD ALBERT CONYNGHAM, K.C.H. F.S.A.

ETC. ETC. ETC.

THESE

Legends of Ancient London

ARE

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be proper to state, that three of the tales in these Volumes, namely, “ Evil May-Day,” “ The Mercer’s Wife,” and “ The Alderman,” appeared in a periodical work some years since ; but they have been revised and enlarged by additional Chapters.

LONDON LEGENDS.

THE FOSTER-SON.

A LEGEND OF

THE WARD OF FARRINGDON EXTRA.

BOOK THE FIRST.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing, with golden face, the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchymy ;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all triumphant splendour on my brow ;
But out ! alack ! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.

SHAKSPERE. *Sonnet XXXIII.*

THE FOSTER-SON.

CHAPTER I.



ON the night of the 26th of October, in the year 1430, when Nicholas Wotton, citizen and draper, was mayor, while the watchman at Clifford's Inn was calling nine, two men, muffled in their cloaks, cautiously emerged from a postern door which led from the rear court of a spacious mansion looking upon the gardens of the inn. Gently closing the door after them, they proceeded down Fleet Street, and soon struck into one of the numerous alleys which intersected that neighbourhood and led to the water side.

“ Ugh ! ” ejaculated one of them, shrugging his shoulders and drawing his cloak closer around him. “ ’Tis a raw night, and this fog smelleth strongly of colds and rheums. I like not this business, Roger. Where did our master say the hag lives ? ”

“ On the Bankside, about a stone’s cast eastward from the Bishop of Winchester’s Mill,” replied the other, who was the taller, and, apparently, the younger of the two.

“ This business will end badly, Roger,” remarked the first man, shaking his head significantly ; “ I would I were well out of it ; but what can a poor steward of the household do ? My master would discard me if I flinched from this service. Marry, I should like to know what will come o’ this night walking.”

“ Why, Gaffer Matthew,” laughed his companion, slapping him on the shoulder, “ thou hast been hearing a sermon at Paul’s Cross to-day, and art a mind eftsoones to turn monk, though, beshrew me, your monk, when *he* walketh o’ nights, stoops at higher game. But tell me truly, Father Matthew, dost thou think

thy young mistress is really married to that coistrel the law student."

"Whist," said the steward, "speak lower, or thou wilt be overheard. If thou lettest thy tongue run so glibly, and talkest so freely of the priests, my life on 't but they will some day impeach thee for a Loller. Lend me thy arm, for this road is a sad one; moreover, my eyes serve me not well o' nights. Now, touching my young mistress, I do aver that she is pure and virtuous—a worthy daughter of her sainted mother who resteth with the holy host in heaven."

"Never mind the saints, friend Matthew," interrupted his companion, "we 'll talk o' them at Hallow mass: I wish to hear of thy master's daughter. Dost thou really think she is married—eh?"

"I do."

"And when was that goodly ceremony performed?"

"I wot not, but 'twas shortly after twelfth-tide, or Barbara lies."

"Ah! there 's *another* woman, and, doubt-

less, it will soon be known that *three* were in the secret: Master Joddrell, sergeant of the coif, says three's a *quorum*, and when a quorum of witches meet, the devil is sure to appear among them."

"A truce with thy idle bantering," said his companion, sharply; "this is no subject for ribald jest. My dear young mistress may become a mother before we return, and I dread her father's harsh treatment: she cries and sobs continually, and needs support and comfort, instead of harsh words and railing. But see, we are at the water's edge: where's the boatman?"

"What ho! waterman!" cried the young man, and the boatman emerged from a rude hovel which overhung the water's edge. In a few minutes the boat was proceeding down the river. All was dark and gloomy; thick mists hung over the water, which but dimly reflected the heavy buildings of the city. The long celebrated Castle Baynard lay on the left, while behind, the giant towers of St. Paul's rose high above the surrounding buildings, mak-

ing the spires of the neighbouring churches appear diminutive under the contrast. In the distance, London Bridge, with its houses and towers, stretched across the river, their dark masses studded at intervals with the light from some chamber whose inmate had not betaken himself to rest so early as his neighbours ; while the sullen roar of the tide as it flowed through its arches, was distinctly heard in the stillness of the night.

The boat soon reached Bankside, and the two men, leaping on shore, proceeded on their way, bidding the waterman wait their return.

This neighbourhood, so celebrated in after times, was, at that period, but thinly peopled ; in the outskirts stood a few country houses of the citizens, and a few straggling huts, the residence of persons of indifferent character, who, jealous of the prying eyes of the city authorities, kept without the walls. Among these hovels was one which had long been tenanted by an old bel-dam, who lived by her profession of midwife and doctress. Some were uncharitable enough to say that to this vocation was added that

of receiver of stolen property and fortune-teller, and strange stories were sometimes told of her dealing with the devil, (common scandal in those days,) the aforesaid good-natured people hinting that there were those in authority who, for various weighty reasons, forbore to have her burnt for a sorceress in Smithfield. Certain it is that while the Londoners were occasionally indulged with the burning of a Lollard or a witch, or the drawing, hanging, and quartering of some sturdy thief or traitor, at Tyburn, the Elms, or St. Thomas-a-Watering, Mother Agatha was left to pursue her calling unmolested.

As the two men approached the cottage, they perceived that it was closed for the night, and that no light was burning within, whereupon they began to batter the door with the toes of their boots, producing a clatter which might have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

“The old Jezebel is gone to see her master the devil, to-night,” said the young man, after a pause, during which he laid his ear to the door,—“I hear nothing stirring.”

Agatha was awake and listening. Alarmed at the voice, she had quitted her mattress, and fearing that the visitors intended her some mischief, she was meditating how she might best avoid the anticipated danger.

“ I pray the saints,” said the old man, eagerly, “ that she be not from home ; I would rather lose my murrey-coloured hood than she should not come with us.”

“ Wait awhile, gentles,” cried a shrill voice from within. “ I stop but to put on my kirtle.”

“ ’Tis well,” observed the older visiter ; “ she is assured that there is no danger, and will be with us anon.”

In a few minutes, the door of the cottage was opened, when they quickly made the bel-dam acquainted with the purport of their visit, promising that she should be well paid for her services. “ All we want,” they observed, “ is silence and obedience. Come, let’s away ; for time flies, and there may be danger if we tarry.”

Hurrying the ancient doctress to the boat, they proceeded up the stream, and soon landed at the stairs from which they had set out.

They had some difficulty in persuading her to allow herself to be blindfolded ; but, terrified by the half-threatening, half-entreating, of her conductors, she yielded herself to their guidance, and was soon at the door of the court from which the men had issued about an hour before.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRTH.

WHEN the bandage was removed from the eyes of the old doctress, she found herself in a large ante-chamber, the walls of which were hung with tapestry representing passages in the life of Absalom. A large fire roared in the chimney, and appeared to have been just lighted, for the unconsumed ends of a fagot had fallen over the brand-irons, which were ornamented with huge brass figures of griffins couchant. She had scarcely taken a survey of the apartment when the steward entered.

He was a man of some sixty years of age, with a venerable aspect, and hair and beard of snowy whiteness, though the quick fire of his eye showed that he yet enjoyed robust health. He wore a grey surcoat trimmed with fur, and from his girdle hung a bunch of keys, and an

esearcelle, or purse, through which was thrust a broad-bladed knife with an ebony haft. A silver chain, from which depended a small whistle of the same metal, was hung round his neck. Though a little bent by age, he was tall and well made, and there was something in his look and manner which assured our doctress that she was in safe hands. She accordingly addressed him with a "Well, master steward, for such I judge you to be, by your apparel, where is the fair lady who needs my poor services?"

"She is in the next chamber, mother," replied the steward, for that indeed was his office; "but you cannot yet be admitted. Poor soul!" he added in an under tone, "I would fain bear half her trouble."

"Ay, ay, I see it all," said the midwife, slowly shaking her head; "shame and sorrow overtake the rich as well as the poor: your young mistress hath found that honied words and false vows are soon uttered, and that no oath is strong enough to bind a false leman; is it not so, master Steward?"

“Thou art not very wide of the mark, mother,” replied the steward, chiming in with the conjecture. “It will favour my master’s intention,” thought he, “if I suffer it to appear thus.”

“Who is the false gallant?” queried the doctress; “what is his name and quality?”

“That is not my business, mother,” remarked the old man in an altered and angry tone. “I brought thee here to perform a certain service, for which thou wilt be well paid. Ask me no questions, for I am in no humour to satisfy thee.”

“But what if I should learn all, and speak of what I see and hear this night?” continued the midwife.

“Even should’st thou learn all,” was the reply, “I would advise thee to do that which, however hard it may be for a woman to do, will be to thy advantage,—hold thy peace, or it may chance that a rousing fire may be lighted for thy especial warming some cold morning in Smithfield.”

Mistress Agatha was somewhat posed by this counsel, which was given in that earnest and

serious tone which shows that the speaker wishes it to have its full weight.

“Jesu Maria!” she cried, clasping her long bony hands, “is this the coin you pay me?”

“Ay, truly,” answered the steward, if you will be prying and troublesome; but if you are discreet and silent, you will have your meed. My master will not fail to pay you handsomely for this night’s work, but if you prate of it, by St. Jude, I would not give my shoe latches for your life, Mother Agatha. The city sergeants already have their eye on your dwelling, and a word from my master would at any time bring their claws upon you.”

The poor obstetrician felt that every word of this advice was sound and good. She knew that women of less suspicious lives than her own, had been led to the stake and burnt as witches or heretics, for either charge was fatal in those fierce days. She was well aware that it was only necessary for a wealthy man to hint that the roasting of a sorceress in Smithfield would furnish a holiday spectacle for the people, and improve the morals of the community at large,

and the thing was done out of hand. She knew all this full well, and was silent.

A young woman now entered the apartment, and without saying a word, beckoned the doctress to follow her. When they were gone, the steward advanced to the hearth, and sighing audibly, began to rake together the unconsumed ends of the logs and throw them on the fire. While thus engaged, the hangings were disturbed, and a figure appeared from behind them. It was the master of the mansion. He walked with a slow and measured step to the fire-place, drew a heavy oaken chair towards it, and seating himself, looked vacantly on the bright flame as it crept over and licked the replenished logs. The steward withdrew to a respectful distance, but kept his eye fixed on his master, who was evidently in a state of great mental suffering. His clenched hands, compressed lips, and corrugated brow showed that he was the victim of some inward struggle which could not be concealed. Low and inarticulate mutterings escaped from him at intervals, during which he twitched convulsively the massive gold chain

which he wore around his neck. That chain had been presented to him by his sovereign for the good service performed by him at Agincourt, when the gallant Alençon and his band of knights rushed on the English monarch and perished in their bold attempt to capture or destroy him.

Sir Everhard Champnes was in his youth one of the bravest knights in England. The heir of great possessions, and skilled in all the accomplishments of the times, he entered upon the world with all the buoyancy and with all the ignorance and impetuosity of youth. Bold, active, and daring, he was at once the admiration and the envy of the gallants of his day. In tilt and tourney few could compete with him, and in the fierce skirmishes and battles of the reign of Henry the Fifth, he acquitted himself so well that he had obtained from that monarch many marks of favour. But Sir Everhard was proud, passionate, and revengeful, qualities which never fail to render men unhappy, however elevated their station in life. These had brought him into collision even with his best friends, and

often embittered a life which otherwise might have been one continued round of enjoyment. He had the good fortune to marry a lady eminent for her beauty and virtue, the only creature capable of subduing his fierce and haughty spirit; a being so mild and gentle that people wondered how two persons so dissimilar in temper could endure the society of each other.

One child only, a daughter, was the fruit of this union. We will not recount all the grand doings at the birth of this little creature; it will be sufficient to say that the red wine flowed abundantly, that meat “both roasted and sodden” was not spared to rich and poor, and that the bells of St. Dunstan’s and St. Bride’s made the steeples vibrate with their thundering clangour for three days successively. Then came the christening, to which all that was noble and gentle were invited, and at which the wine again flowed in streams. Scarcely, however, had these rejoicings ended when death entered the mansion of Sir Everhard, and dashed the cup from his lips. A slight cold, caught at mass, perhaps unskil-

fully treated by the medical men of that day, who were chiefly ecclesiastics, laid the foundation of an illness which in six months consigned the amiable and beautiful partner of Sir Everhard to a premature grave.

We must drop the veil over the sorrows of the bereaved husband, who was crushed to the earth by this sad affliction. It was then, and then only that a tear was seen in his haughty eye: sorrow and adversity can alone humble such spirits; but

“——Time, great comforter, whose gracious gloom
Soothes the sad past and veils the griefs to come——”

Time effected for the bereaved knight what his few intimate friends endeavoured in vain to afford him. His thoughts were then turned to that dear pledge of his union; all the love which he had felt for his deceased wife seemed revived in that which he cherished for his child, whose beauty, as she grew up, was the theme of all the gossips without the walls. Years wore away, and while Sir Everhard grew more morose and misanthropical, his daughter increased in loveliness as she increased in stature.

A beautiful child is always a source of anxiety and uneasiness to such a father. The knight loved his daughter with that excess of fondness which is not unfrequently observed in persons of his temperament; and he often witnessed with alarm the effect of her beauty whenever she appeared in public. When attending mass at the parish church, all eyes were upon her. Gallants of every rank forgot their responses, and mistold their beads, as look and thought wandered to the fair Isabel. The elder and graver citizens shook their heads portentously as they beheld how the dazzling beauty of the knight's daughter disturbed the devotions of their sons and nephews; while their wives and daughters swelled with mortification and envy at the surpassing loveliness of the high-born damsel. Still there were some of the good wives who would not subscribe to the general opinion on this head; among these was Mistress Jekyll, the spouse of Jonas Jekyll, citizen and stockfishmonger, who thought her girls were of fairer complexion than the Lady Isabel; and sooth to say, they were fairer, and

withal not uncomely ; for Isabel was a brunette, and a brunette of so rare an order, that, while her features were moulded in the highest style of English beauty, her complexion rivalled that of the women of a more southern clime. Her swan-like neck, oval face, smooth and placid brow, and mild eyes (the greatest beauty in woman), half hidden by their long silken lashes, were raised but seldom, yet when they were raised they caused the breast of many a youth to heave beneath his vest, or “petite coate,” as it was then called.

Among the crowd of Isabel’s admirers was a young student of Serjeant’s Inn, named Reginald Chychelye, the son of a wealthy merchant, and the nephew of one who had twice been Lord Mayor of London.

He had been adopted by an uncle, who had left him considerable property, on condition that he pursued the study of the law ; but some of his relatives did not hesitate to say that he was wholly unfit for such a profession. Of a bold and ardent temperament, he was the foremost in the numerous sports of the young

Londoners at that day. His handsome figure, though half concealed by the law student's gown, had attracted the notice of many a city maiden; and some there were who thought that his fine features would look to advantage under a sallet or casquetel, and that the camail of a man-at-arms would more become those manly shoulders than the furred tippet of the inns of court. The Lady Isabel thought so too, and had often admired the handsome Reginald; while he, on the other hand, was sure to be at the church-porch on her ingress or egress. It was true, there were many other smart young men who thronged the doors; but Isabel saw only one—the handsome student in his grey gown, trimmed with sables, and girt with a silken cord.

We have said enough to prepare the reader, who must be dull indeed, if he require to be told that our young couple were soon enamoured of each other. They found means to meet—no matter how—vowed, loved, sighed, and promised eternal constancy; but, while all this was passing, Sir Everhard was dili-

gently looking for a husband for his Isabel, his maxim being, like that of an English knight of a later day—"Marry your daughters young, lest they marry themselves." In Lionel Audleye, the eldest son of a knight of great possessions, he thought he had discovered a fit husband for his beloved daughter. It was with difficulty Isabel could support herself through the ceremony of introduction; and in her next stolen interview with Reginald she imparted to him her anxiety and dread. They had gone too far to recede—the die was cast; Reginald felt that he must secure his treasure, or see it torn from him; in a word, the lovers found some good old monk who sympathised with them, and they were secretly married.

Their first burst of passion over, our lovers awoke to a sense of their danger. Reginald shuddered when he reflected on the consequences of their rash step. His alarm increased when Isabel, at one of their stolen meetings, whispered to him her fears that she was about to become a mother. Unhappy pair!

much as they dreaded the coming storm, they were not prepared to see it burst so soon over their devoted heads.

There are meddlesome and malignant spirits in every neighbourhood. The knight was informed of the meeting of the lovers, and he then discovered the state of his much loved child. We must draw a veil over the scene which followed: it will be sufficient to observe, that the mansion of Sir Everhard resounded for some days after the dire discovery, with oaths, imprecations, groans, and sobbing. The terrified domestics feared the presence of their master, who chafed like a wild beast in the toils of the hunter. Luckily for Reginald, Barbara, the Lady Isabel's maid, had found the means of making him acquainted with the discovery, and the youthful husband was suddenly missing from his chambers. Of course, the event furnished abundant matter for the gossips and scandal-mongers of the neighbourhood, and the wildest and most improbable stories were soon circulated to the prejudice of the Lady Isabel, her father, and her lover.

When the knight's more violent paroxysms of rage had in some measure subsided, he began not only to interrogate his daughter, but also to consider how he might conceal the shame which had fallen on his house. Several painful scenes passed between the angry parent and his child, whom he cursed and entreated by turns. To add to his misery, he could only learn from Isabel that she had been married, but at what place and by whom she was utterly ignorant—she had never inquired of Reginald, and he had never told her. The thought that she was his—his *wife*; and that no power could separate them, was enough for one who, guileless herself, could not entertain suspicion of any human creature. Still, Isabel felt the reproach of having deceived a fond and indulgent parent, and bitter pangs wrung her heart, as she thought on her fugitive husband, her own critical state, and the anger of her maddened father.

The knight, at length, fell into a sullen mood, scarcely uttering a word for days together; but his servants thought this un-

natural silence more alarming than his violent rage. He shut himself up in his room, and held no communication with any one except his steward, who took to him his meals, and appeared to be more assiduous than ever in his attention to his master. Sir Everhard believed that his child had been made the dupe of a villain, and vowed the direst vengeance against the invader of his peace. Horrible thoughts filled his brain, and he resolved to get rid—at whatever cost—of, as he believed, his daughter's spurious offspring. For this purpose he had procured the attendance of the aged doctress, who has been introduced to the reader, in order that no report should get abroad of the birth of the infant.

We left the knight seated by the fire in the ante-chamber, his steward standing a few paces off: that faithful servant watched him intently, and grieved to witness the war of his master's passions, which the working of his features so painfully indicated. He was terrible in that fit of silent agony.

As they sat in silence and anxiety, the

faint cry of a new-born child was heard in the next chamber. The knight started at the sound, and slung himself half round in his huge chair, making the legs grind harshly on the oak floor.

“Matthew,” said he, in a suppressed tone, which made the steward’s flesh creep, and the scalp of his head collapse—“the brat must die !”

“God forbid, my master !” ejaculated the steward, with emotion — “for Jesu’s sake have mercy.”

“Sirrah !” cried Sir Everhard, starting from his chair, and glaring fiercely.

“Pardon me, noble sir, said the faithful servant, dropping on one knee, and raising his hands imploringly ; “I am your servant,—ay, your slave, if it must be”—

“Then obey my bidding.”

“I will, I will, my honoured master,” said the steward, while tears filled his eyes ; “but, for my dear young lady’s sake, for your *own* sake, too, forbear your purpose for the present ; ’tis fraught with danger to us all.”

The knight was about to make some angry reply, when a rustling was heard behind the hangings, and the midwife made her appearance.

“Joy to you, noble sir,” said she at the highest pitch of her cracked voice; “your son, or grandson, it may be, will live to be a proper man-at-arms! marry, he snatched up a handful of rushes as soon as he was born, like Willy the Norman, and seized my arm as though it had been a morris pike or partisan. Ha! the young rogue”—

She was proceeding in this strain, when Sir Everhard cast a glance of chagrin and impatience at the steward, who advanced, and placing a bandage over her eyes, bade her be silent, and led her from the apartment, putting at the same time a couple of gold nobles in her hand. Old Agatha was conducted to the door by which she had entered, where a man was waiting to receive her, and convey her to the river-side.

As the door was cautiously closed after her, and the bolts were drawn, the watchman on

the neighbouring tower bawled eleven, and a bright meteor burst from the murky clouds which hung over the steeple of St. Dunstan's. It darted in an easterly direction, illuming the house-tops, tall chimneys, signs, and weather-cocks of Fleet Street, and seemed to descend on the high tower of the monastery of the Dominicans, or Black Friars.

CHAPTER III.

THE STOLEN INTERVIEW.

IT soon became noised abroad that Sir Everhard had detected the student's amour with his daughter. The result of that amour was, however, known only to two or three confidential servants of his household. In the absence, therefore, of positive information, the wildest rumours were circulated throughout the neighbourhood, and scandal wagged her tongue in the shops of the traders of Fleet Street, in the taverns, and in the inns of court.

Reginald was missing from his usual haunts, and it was observed that strange and suspicious looking men were often to be seen lurking beneath the windows of his chambers. The only creature known to visit Sir Everhard at this juncture was young Lionel Audleye, and it had been remarked that, on more occasions

than one, the knight and this young gallant had been seen in deep and earnest conversation in the gallery which overhung the rear-court of the mansion.

Sir Everhard, at the earnest entreaty of his faithful steward, had consented to postpone for a few days the execution of his cruel project. The old man hoped, in the mean time, to mollify the wrath of his fierce master, and obtain some commutation of the sentence he had pronounced on the little innocent. He found, to his great joy, that he had not miscalculated; and, after much importunity, succeeded in obtaining from Sir Everhard a promise that the infant's life should be spared, and that it should be delivered to some honest and humane couple who, for a sum of money, might be prevailed upon to adopt the child as their own. This the honest steward hoped to accomplish by the aid of old Agatha, who, he doubted not, would, for a consideration, undertake to provide the infant with foster-parents. Matthew had many reasons for all this; he wished to avoid participation in a crime which might bring him, as an accomplice.

to the gibbet ; he wished to save the reputation, and the soul of his master, from a proceeding so diabolical ; and motives of common humanity, as well as love for his young mistress, all urged him to risk the knight's anger and resentment. He cared not for the browbeating he encountered so that his object was accomplished. All his efforts in the cause of humanity were, however, paralysed by an event which soon occurred in the mansion of Sir Everhard.

Young Lionel Andleye was kept in utter ignorance of the Lady Isabel's situation. Sir Everhard had indulged the vain and absurd hope that it could be kept concealed from the world : those who were acquainted with the secret being sworn not to reveal it ; the loss of their situations, perhaps of their lives, would have been the forfeit of their making the event known.

One evening, about two hours after the watch had been set, Sir Everhard was seated in his private room, musing, in gloomy silence, on the situation of his daughter. He felt that a dark cloud had overshadowed his house, and that his hopes of a high alliance for his child

had been destroyed. Young Audleye, wild and thoughtless as he was generally reckoned, was not to be persuaded to urge his suit, and in this respect had evinced more judgment and discretion than his friends had supposed him to possess, though, in all probability, some of them had, in this particular instance, assisted him with their counsel.

This shyness on the part of the young gallant had amazed Sir Everhard exceedingly : his irritable and sensitive mind was tormented by the thought that his daughter was not considered a fitting match for Lionel Audleye ; and his irritability had increased to such a degree, that had the young man hinted as much during their interviews, he would probably have slain him outright for his presumption.

Sir Everhard had always been the slave of his passions, and they were this evening driving him to a pitch of frenzy. He sat in a large carved oak chair, with pinnacled back, stuffed with crimson velvet ; his elbow rested on the table, and his head reclined on his left hand, which half covered his features ; his right hand

hung listlessly over the arm of the chair, unconscious of contact with the cold nose of a large wolf-dog, that had tried in vain to court his master's caresses, and lay crouched before the fire, which flared and flickered up the chimney, casting a lurid glare on the disturbed features of the knight, and making the figures in the tapestry on the walls alternately vanish and reappear, like the shadows of objects passing before the sun.

“ Ah me !” sighed the knight—“ my hopes are blighted, my good name tarnished, and my child estranged from me. I do begin to perceive that Father Thomas saith truly when he tells us that everything in this world is fleeting and unstable.”

He ceased, and quitting his recumbent position, looked anxiously around him, as if he feared that some one might have overheard his soliloquy. It was the first of the kind he had uttered during his life ; but the feeling which prompted it was merely momentary, and soon yielded to others in which both the gentleman and the Christian were compromised.

As he thus sat musing in the bitterness of his heart, the thought occurred to him that he would pay a visit to the chamber of his daughter, whom he had not seen for several days past. He arose and proceeded thither, his heart beating thick as he neared the room. He was about to raise the latch, when the deep tones of a male voice struck on his ear. He started. The voice was strange to him. Could it be a phantasy of his brain? His heart beat wildly,—his daughter was surely not defying him. Determined to know the worst, he raised the latch with his left hand, while he grasped his dagger tightly with his right, and pushed open the door. The tall figure of a man, his size magnified by his shadowing the tapers which stood behind him, appeared in the middle of the room, and round his neck was clinging, in speechless agony, the Lady Isabel, pale as a corpse, and sinking with terror.—It was Reginald ! Braving every danger, he had sought and obtained an interview with his beloved Isabel.

“ Accursed viper ! ” cried the knight, spring-

ing into the room and brandishing his dagger ;
“ take the guerdon of thy treachery !”

He struck with all his might at Reginald ; but the blow, dealt in the blind fury of rage and hatred, was ill-directed. Disengaging himself from Isabel, who sunk into a chair, Reginald had just time to snatch up a cushion, in which the knight's dagger was buried harmlessly.

“ Isabel, sweet love, forgive me !” cried the youth, not perceiving that she had fainted, and throwing himself upon Sir Everhard, he bore him to the ground, wrested the dagger from his grasp—threw it from him, and rushed from the apartment.

He gained the corridor, through which he flew on the wings of terror, and reached the gallery, from the balustrade of which hung the rope-ladder by which he had obtained an entry to the house. He had just cleared the gallery, and was already about to descend, when the countenance of the knight, inflamed with rage and hatred, appeared above him.

Reginald shuddered as he beheld that hor-

ribly distorted visage, which resembled the grotesque and hideous figures wherewith the architects of the middle ages decked their buildings, more than the features of a human creature.

Reginald saw his enemy grasp the hooks by which the ladder was suspended and struggle violently to disengage them.

“ Have mercy, Sir Everhard ! ” he supplicated in a faint voice, half inarticulate from terror. “ You would not destroy me !—spare me for your daughter’s sake ! ”

A growl of wrathful malice was the only reply to this piteous entreaty, and the knight renewed his endeavours to disengage the grapples of the ladder.

Reginald, finding remonstrance unavailing, commenced descending the ladder, which, by the knight’s efforts to disengage it, now acquired an oscillating motion, rendering it difficult for him to retain his footing. As it swung to and fro, the poor youth found his courage forsake him.

“ Blessed Virgin ! oh, all ye holy ones ! ” he mentally ejaculated, while cold drops stood

on his brow—"save me from the fury of this fierce man."

Just then, the rope swung still farther outwards, and as it returned dashed the youth against one of the carved supporters of the gallery. The blow nearly stunned him; he lost his hold and fell backward, his feet catching in the rounds of the ladder; at the same time the knight, redoubling his efforts, tore the grapples from the balustrade, cast them from him, and the body of Reginald fell, head downwards, into the paved court, with a frightful crash.

"What ho!—lights!" shouted Sir Everhard, gazing intently upon the crushed and mutilated mass which lay below.

At that moment, Matthew rushed out on the gallery, bearing in his hand a large taper. Without heeding his master, he leant over the gallery and looked on the quivering heap below. A mingled expression of pity and horror wrung the venerable features of the steward. He turned his eyes reproachfully upon the knight, who perceived that they were filled with tears.

"How now?" growled Sir Everhard.

“ Heaven shield us, sir,” ejaculated Matthew, in a voice tremulous with emotion, “ the man is slain !”

“ He was the enemy of mine house,” remarked the knight in a tone of affected indifference, with which his haggard eye, trembling lip, and blanched cheek, but ill-accorded, “ May all who—”

He was interrupted by the cries of the domestics below, who had gathered round the body of Reginald, the noise of whose fall had roused the neighbourhood. Casements were thrown open in every direction, and anxious and alarmed faces appeared at them, while the watch, roused by the uproar, hastened to the scene, and were admitted to the court-yard, followed by crowds of persons who had been attracted to the spot.

The blaze of torches and cressets now rendered every object visible. The crowd increased, cries of pity and alarm rose from the people, when suddenly the piercing shrieks of a female, in the gallery above them, caused every one to turn from the miserable spectacle of the

murdered man, and look upward. A tall and elegant female was seen struggling in the grasp of two men, who with difficulty restrained her from precipitating herself below. Shriek after shriek rose high above the voices of the crowd, and as the unhappy lady was forced from the gallery and borne into the house, they heard her cry, in accents which thrilled to the heart of the stoutest among them, "*Cruel father, you have murdered him!*"



CHAPTER IV.

THE MERCHANT.

IF the reader has ever dipped into our old chroniciers he will not require to be told that Fleet Ditch, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, was not then, as in after times, merely an enormous sewer; on the contrary, it was a wide and rapid stream, which flowed up to the foot of Holborn Hill, where it received the tributary waters of Old Bourn, the Fleet, and Turnmill Brook. To this point it was navigable by barges and vessels of considerable burthen, while on its banks were commodious wharfs and quays.

On the western bank of this stream, towards the Thames, was the Well dedicated to St. Bride, which gave the name to the parish church and the ancient palace of Bridewell.

Henry the First had mutilated and deprived this palace of its fair proportions, giving much of the stone from the outer walls towards the building of the church. It was in this place, we are told, that the same monarch extorted from the heads of the religious houses, whom he had assembled within its walls, the enormous sum of a hundred thousand pounds.

At the time of our tale it had been suffered to fall into decay, and in succeeding reigns it became ruinous, and was demolished by Henry the Eighth, who rebuilt it for the reception of the Emperor Charles the Fifth.

On the opposite side of the stream, within the ancient walls of the city, rose the towers of the long celebrated Blackfriars monastery, of which nothing but the name remains.

On the western bank of the stream, about a stone's cast from the Thames, stood the house of John Furnival, citizen and merchant tailor, a man of weight and credit, who had made several voyages on his own account, and who was held in great repute by his neighbours. Master Furnival was a thorough man of busi-

ness; his time was divided between his vocation and his two children, a girl and a boy, the pledges of a fond and faithful wife, whose remains mouldered beneath the chancel of the church of St. Bride.

On the morning after the sad catastrophe described in the preceding chapter, our merchant was seated at his desk, intent upon an account of his last half-year's profits, when he was interrupted by a visit from one of his neighbours, Master Nicholas Fleming, citizen and skinner, dwelling at the sign of the Fox, in Fleet Street.

“ Good morrow, neighbour Furnival,” said the skinner, extending his hand.

“ Good morrow,” returned the merchant, laying down his pen, and closing his ledger with the precaution of a wary trader.—“ What news ? ”

“ Little, I trow, that's good. There was a sad bickering in Fleet Street, yester-night, which has made work for the coroner, I fear.”

“ Ha ! ” said Master Furnival, looking serious ; “ another outbreak of the law-students,

I suppose—those inns of court are pest-houses—there `s no brooking their insolence.”

“ True,” remarked the skinner. “ It was but yesterday, when walking to vespers, that one of these scapegraces plucked off my hood and threw it in my face, while another kissed my daughter and compared me to a he-goat.” Here he stroked his comely beard with a complacent air.

“ Who was hurt in the ruffle ? ” inquired the merchant.

“ This time it is a student, but I wot not who it is ; he was slain while attempting to enter Sir Everhard Champnes’ house.—Hath the bale of minever arrived, Master Furnival ? ”

“ Ay, and a choice lot of sables to boot : and the Spanish galliot which arrived yesterday, and will discharge to-day, brings me some black genets which I am advised are fit for the mantle of a prince.”

“ This is well,” said Master Nicholas ; “ I beseech you, let me have a few of them ; for Adam Gooch, the tailor, hath an order to make

a gown for Master Trumplett, of the common council, and I have none to sell him ; he plagues me like a tertian, and yet the rogue hath not paid me his last account which was due at Whitsuntide. Methinks our citizens are growing prodigal and improvident ; we want the enforcement of the good old sumptuary laws, which kept an honest man's expenses within the bounds of discretion, neighbour. Heaven knows what will become o' this city if such luxury prevails. You meet gay hoods and gold chains at every turning. There's Nic Studelye, the stockfishmonger's son, who, on holidays, wears a silver-handled dagger, a chain, and a ring set with a ruby valued at five Harry nobles. Such excess denoteth the downfall of merry England, who, like Rome of old, methinks hath outgrown herself."

"Thou art much of my mind, gossip," said a third party, who entered at the moment. He was a meagre looking man, with a dark grey threadbare gown, a cap of the same colour, and an inkhorn slung by a worsted cord around his neck. It was Elias Crane, the

notary, of St. Bride's Lane. "I hold with you there," said he; "the law-students ape their betters, and our citizens' sons, in their turn, ape the students, and honest folk suffer by this mummary and mocking."

"What was the name of the man who was slain last night?" inquired the merchant.

"They say, 'tis Reginald Chychelye," replied the notary, "a student of Serjeant's Inn, a worthy young man, and not given to the wild doings of his brethren."

"What did he then in the knight's house?" remarked the merchant.

"I wot not," continued Crane; "but 'tis said there had been some love passages between him and the knight's daughter, who is passing fair."

As he spoke, a man entered, and, doffing his cap, presented to the merchant a small strip of paper, containing a few closely-written lines: then, turning to Master Fleming, he delivered to him a similar billet. "Save you, sirs," said he, "his worship, the coroner, will require your attendance at the Falcon,

this evening. I missed you at your house, Master Fleming."

And, so saying, the beadle of the ward departed to serve the rest of his summonses to the inquest.

"Faugh!" said the merchant with a shudder; "I like not looking upon dead men; and yet I misliked not the sight of a dead Frenchman in my young days, when I was a merchant of the staple at Calais. We had rough work of it then, at times, and hard knocks were to be had cheaply. But what says the knight to this matter?"

"I am told," replied the notary, "that he swears 'twas a mischance, and that the youth perished by his own rashness. The people, however, don't credit the tale, and he has been constrained to send to Castle Baynard for a party of archers,—the captain of the guard there is his nephew,—for the students swear they'll be revenged on him, and pull his house about his ears."

"And they'll be as good as their word," observed Master Fleming, "for they sometimes

perform more than they promise. I could not sleep if I thought these wild losels meant me mischief. They are all fashioned o' the same stuff: even Master Geoffrey Chaucer, who, ye wot, lived in the reign of Harry the Fourth, though the limner hath painted him demure and lamb-like, was a wild fellow in his youth, and when keeping his terms beat a preaching friar in Fleet Street like a stock-fish. You will be at the inquest betimes, Master Funnival ? ”

“ Ay, truly,” replied the merchant ; “ and now, I pray you, excuse me, for I have letters to write which I must despatch by the next tide.”

So saying, he re-opened his ledger, and the two gossips departed.

CHAPTER V.

THE CORONER AND THE JURY.

TOWARDS evening a crowd began to assemble before the Falcon, in Fleet Street, at the door of which were stationed several men in the city liveries, armed with brown bills. Four sergeants-at-arms were also there, mace in hand; not the crown-tipped toy which is now thrust in your face when you try to get a peep at a passing procession on its way to the Mansion-house, but the veritable weapon of that name, which, wielded by a powerful hand, would beat a man-at-arms out of his saddle. The bells of St. Bride's and St. Dunstan's were ringing to even-song; night was beginning to descend upon the city, accompanied by one of those fogs so frequent in London at this time of the year, and

the tradespeople were closing their shops and stalls. The assembly was composed of several grades of persons ; there was a sprinkling of law students, the middle class of citizens, serving men and women, and no small number of water-men, water-carriers, labourers, and persons of no particular occupation, but who are always to be found on the look-out on such occasions.

As the coroner had not yet arrived, the mob, as is the custom of mobs at the present day, began to amuse themselves in various ways. At one time, a hood, snatched from the head of some ancient citizen, would be cast into the air and jerked from hand to hand to the infinite vexation and alarm of its owner, who trembled lest it should never come back again. At another, a similar feat would be performed with a basket or bundle carried by, on the head or shoulder of some porter or apprentice. Then there was coarse and lewd bantering in plenty, and ever and anon a roar of boisterous laughter, for at such times the mob are ever ready for a laugh.

“ Body o’ me ! ” cried a fellow who wore the

garb and had the sooty visage of a smith or armourer, "look at that greasy-faced frere, winking and blinking like Madge Howlet, near the door-post—he hath grown fat by over-feeding—he seems asleep, though on his legs. Give him a prick with your awl, Will Cobbler."

At that moment the hood we have been writing of, descended near the mendicant friar, and was thrown, hind before, over his head by one of the mob, who awakened him from his reverie by a violent shove, which sent his portly figure, head foremost, into the midst of the little band of city officers.

"Where the devil art thou driving, monk?" swore one of the sergeants, forcibly pushing back the poor ecclesiastic, who was struggling to disengage his head from the hood. "If thou art fond of this pastime, go to Southwark and pight thyself against one of the Abbot of Battle's bulls!"

The friar, finding his situation anything but comfortable, backed out of the crowd, who then turned their rude practical jokes upon some other person.

“Halloo !” cried a fellow in the dress of a baker, as he espied a grave-looking citizen approaching—“Here’s old Turnpenny, farmer of the murage ’twixt Newgate and Castle Baynard. I suppose he’s summoned on the inquest.—Room for master Turnpenny, knaves and gentlemen’s sons.”

“Room for a fragment of the *duodecim virale judicium* !” roared the law students—“room for a very incarnation of the *jus gentium* !”

Master Turnpenny with difficulty elbowed his way through the crowd, though assisted by the sergeants-at-arms. Another juror then came in sight. It was Adam Trusscote, collector of the ceragium, or contribution towards wax-lights consumed in the churches within the ward.

“Room for Adam Trusscote, the walking *fiscus*, of Fewter’s Lane, collector of waxscot in the ward of Farringdon Extra,” cried the students.

“Room for the man of wax !” bawled the ’prentices.

“Here comes old Fleming the skinner !”

cried one of the students. "How surly the old fox is looking! Ho! master skinner, how of your pretty daughter? Who would suppose such a fair maid would call *thee* father."

"Ha, losel!" muttered Fleming between his closed teeth, "were I ten years younger I'd cudgel thy saucy pride out o' thee!"

"What's that you're muttering, gaffer?" cried the student; but the skinner had passed the group of officers, and was out of hearing.

"Here comes a vender of stockfish," said the smith, who was about half drunk. "Old Nicholas Studelye, of St. Bride's Lane, who starves his 'prentices, and hath always a licence himself to eat meat at Lent. Out upon the niggard! I would as soon bind my boy to Mahoud and Termagant as to such as he!"

"For shame! for shame! fie on thee, John-a-Dory!" cried the 'prentices; "we'll trundle thee in one of thy herring tubs, some day."

A tall, gaunt, austere looking man, in a priest's habit, next made his appearance. The crowd made way for him with a feeling of re-

verence, and their bantering was hushed until he had entered the house.

“That’s father Thomas, the mass-priest of St. Dunstan’s,” remarked one of the students, in a whisper, to his companion. “Did you mark how the greasy rogues cleared the way for the lord of *nonæ* and *decimæ*; he has great weight with these citizens, and my life on’t, by his coming here, he’ll influence the jurors and get the old knight out o’ the scrape.”

Then came the merchant, Furnival, neatly and becomingly dressed in a sad coloured gown with a purple hood, the poulaines or pikes of his shoes being restricted to three inches in length, a very notable brevity in those days, when fashion seemed to have run mad, and even the grave citizens of London strove to outvie each other in extravagance of costume.

His reception by the mob was very different from that of the persons who had just preceded him. Master Furnival was a man of a most benevolent and charitable disposition, and his annual donations to the poor of his parish were

greater than those of any merchant or trader within the ward. As soon, therefore, as he came in sight he was saluted with boisterous cheering, and cries of "Save you, worthy sir! Jesu bless the friend of the poor man!—Long live master Furnival, who remembereth the poor in the trying season!"

The merchant appeared ill at ease under this salutation. He was a diffident man, and his fine countenance, on which age had begun to fix its seal, flushed like a girl's who listens to the praises of her beauty. Perhaps, also, he had no relish for popular applause, well knowing that it is a very ephemeral possession. He therefore acknowledged the greeting by bowing in a confused and hurried manner, and was glad to escape from the scene by hastening into the house.

A cry was now raised of "the coroner!" and that important functionary was seen approaching on horseback, attended by his clerk, and two men wearing the red cross of St. George embroidered on their white tabards, or sleeveless coats.

At the period of which we write, the office of coroner was one of great weight and importance: not that it is less so now, but that it was then held by persons of higher rank than at the present day.

In the charter of King Athelstan to Beverley, in the year 925, mention is made of the coroner. The Statute of Westminster ordains that he shall be one of the discreetest knights within the realm. The ancient writ, *Nisi sit Miles*, &c., shows that the person holding this office should be a knight, and in the receipt of one hundred shillings rent of freehold. Those who would know more of the duties of a coroner in old times, may consult Bracton; but it may be as well to mention here that it was not until the time of Edward the Fourth that the mayor and commonalty of London were empowered to grant the office of coroner to whom they thought fit. That sanguinary despot, who owed so much to the Londoners, granted them many privileges, and, among others, that of electing a coroner.

There was a temporary cessation to the

bantering of the crowd on the arrival of this important functionary. The working-men and apprentices looked demure, and several of the students retired to the rear. Some of them had very good reasons for this shyness, for they had been a little compromised in a recent inquiry arising out of a fray in which the students of the inns of court had been engaged. When, however, the coroner had disappeared, the joking and buffoonery was renewed, and as each juror presented himself, he was saluted according to his merits or demerits; but, as night was descending on the city, and it was growing cold, the mob began to abate: the workmen betook themselves to the alehouses, the law-students to the taverns, and the 'prentices to their masters' houses. Nevertheless, a knot of persons still lingered around the doors of the Falcon to hear the result of the inquest.

While the inquiry was proceeding, two of the sergeants-at-arms suddenly quitted their post, and proceeded to the house of Sir Everhard Champnes. They were soon seen re-

turning with old Matthew, the steward, who was ushered by them into the inquest-room.

“That old fellow,” said a woman, whose party-coloured hood denoted her vocation, “follows a strange master—a very Turk, who would stab a man on the high altar, if he had a grudge against him. I marvel what Father Thomas can see in that said knight.”

“Nothing at all,” said a one-eyed, sinister-looking man; “and that ’s the secret. If you want a priest not to see, you ’ve only to clap a noble on each peeper, and he ’s as blind as a bat at noon-day.”

“Ay, and one put into his mouth will tie his tongue,” remarked another woman.

“Hold thy tongue, Moll,” said an old man, in a tattered gaberdine, “or thy feet may become acquainted with St. Dunstan’s stocks to-morrow. These city sergeants have the ears of a hound.”

“Out upon the knaves!” cried the lady in the party-coloured hood, snapping her fingers contemptuously; “only let me catch one or

two of them within St. Martin's, and, by St. Bridget, they shall not 'scape scot free."

It will be scarcely necessary to remind the metropolitan antiquary, that the speaker alluded to the long famous sanctuary of St. Martin's le Grand, which had existed in London for many centuries, which the sergeants wisely refrained from entering, unless backed by a strong guard.

"When will they bury young Reginald?" asked the old man.

"Oh, to-morrow, they say; he is to be buried in the church of St. Nicholas Acon, in Lombard Street; his fellow-students will follow the body, and there will be as many candles lighted as in a procession on Corpus Christi day."

"But what will be done with the knight who murdered him?"

Here the conversation was interrupted by the city sergeants, who drove the speakers from the door, bidding them bridle their tongues, and beware of the stocks.

This mandate was obeyed, but not without a

few half-suppressed curses upon the Jacks-in-office, as they termed the sergeants.

About two hours had worn away since the arrival of the coroner, when a bustle within the house indicated that the inquest was broken up, and that the jury were about to depart to their homes. All were on tiptoe ; the decision reached the ears of the city officers, and was soon spread abroad among the crowd. Old Matthew was escorted back to his master's by two of the sergeants, amidst the hootings of the mob ; and a few minutes after the verdict—" *chance-medley*," was the subject of conversation throughout the ward.

CHAPTER VI.

LOST LABOUR.

THE verdict of the jury was announced to Sir Everhard by his faithful steward, who hurried to his master's apartment with the welcome intelligence. The knight felt relieved from the load of anxiety and dread which had oppressed him since the fatal evening on which he had deprived a fellow-creature of life ; but his resolution to remove the innocent offspring of his child remained unchanged.

He felt no remorse for the deed he had performed within the precincts of his own dwelling. His resentment had not abated with the death of the man who had, as he believed, brought dishonour on his house ; and, freed from the dreaded consequences of his destruction, he next

considered how the infant might be removed, without suspicion falling on him or his household. All he could elicit from his daughter was, that she had met Reginald at a house near the cathedral of Saint Paul, and that an aged priest had made them man and wife. She was entirely ignorant of the name, quality, and habitation of the ecclesiastic. Reginald, she knew, was too honourable to practise deceit upon her, and it was not until after she had been subjected to the interrogatories of her fierce parent that the thought of a pretended marriage occupied her mind; then, and not till then, did she address a letter to her beloved Reginald. He answered it in person, and at the cost of his life.

We must leave for awhile the unhappy lady and her sorrows.

Although loud complaints had been made by the friends of the murdered student, and many of his companions had sworn vengeance against his destroyer, the ferment, as in all similar cases, soon subsided; the armed men were withdrawn from Sir Everhard's house, and the

citizens began to look about for some other subject on which to offer their opinions and conjectures. There is always a desire for "something new" among folks who are amused or interested in the occurrences of the day; and these were not few in the good old times. A gaudy pageant, a succession of miracle plays, or mysteries, a fray between the young gentlemen of the inns of court and the citizens, or the burning of a witch or a "Loller" in Smithfield, were the scenes which served at once to entertain and instruct the Londoners in the middle ages.

Old Matthew had several conferences with his master respecting the child, and it was not without some entreaty that he had prevailed upon the knight to suffer him to find some honest persons who would be willing to adopt it as their own. With this view, he took boat one morning, and proceeded to old Agatha's, on the Bankside.

"Good morrow, mother," said the steward as he entered the hovel; "I come to consult

you on a matter which may be to your benefit——”

“And to your master’s, I suppose,” interrupted the midwife: “he would remove that child—is it not so?”

“Thou art not far from the truth, Mother Agatha,” replied the steward, “and I know you can help him, if you will.”

“Ay, ay,” continued the doctress, — “and hang or burn me, when all is done to his satisfaction.”

“He might do either, if it pleased him,” remarked Matthew.

The old woman looked at him contemptuously from under her long, white eyebrows, and placed her fore-finger significantly by the side of her long, peaked nose: “Hark’e, old sir,” said she; “your master may burn or hang me; but I say, the child will live and be a great man, in spite of his malice. Both he and you, no doubt, think yourselves a match for an old wife; but I tell you, I know all, and that I would pick out the little fellow from among a thousand children.”

“ They who have dealings with the devil can do many strange things,” observed Matthew, drily.

“ Pish ! ’tis well to frighten ’prentices and serving-wenches with tales of Sathanas and his imps,” said the beldam ; “ but you and I know there is no devilry in these matters, master steward.”

“ Gadzooks, cried the steward, “ I wouldn’t be bail for you, Mistress Agatha.”

“ I would not be bail for your master,” returned the old woman : “ he, I verily do believe, has had dealings with the devil, who will one day claim his own : they say he killed the young student, and that Father Thomas talked to the jury and turned their heads”—

“ Thon hast lost thy senses !” interrupted the steward.

“ Not I, indeed,” continued the beldam : “ ’tis your master whose wits have gone astray.”

“ Come, come, mother,” said Matthew, “ we will not talk any more of this. Here is a gold piece, which my master charged me to give you. We want your assistance to dispose of

the child, for he will bring disgrace upon my master's house."

"Ha ! ha ! ha !" chuckled the doctress, turning to look to a mess of porridge which hung over the fire, and singing in a cracked voice,

"How should your leman be known, pretty Madge ?
How should your leman be known ?"

"Thou art as wilful as a young colt, mother," said the steward, angrily.

The old lady did not cease stirring the porridge, but looked over her shoulder at the steward with a sinister leer, and sung,

"Give water and sackcloth to those that are dull,
And beef, ale, and sack to the merry."

"Holy Virgin !" cried the old man, "thou art surely distraught : instead of plain answers to my questions, I get snatches of ale-house songs."

"Hark 'e, sir steward," said the doctress, leaving her porridge-pot to seethe and simmer by itself, "I've a concern for that boy you

speak of: I won't have him harmed for the world. Have a care how you treat him, for if he meet with any ill, as I shrewdly suspect you intend him, you will pay a visit to the Elms some morning, as sure as you serve a bad master." Having uttered this, she placed her arms akimbo, and looked the steward in the face until he became confused, and cast his eyes on the ground.

"It is the devil who has crept into the old woman's body," thought he, and the surmise made his flesh creep, for Matthew was as superstitious as his betters.

"Mother," said he, "I wish the child no harm; and to prove it to thee, I will tell thee at once, that I am charged to find some honest people who will make it their own. To tell thee plainly, I would not hurt a hair of its innocent head to be made an alderman."

"If I may believe thee," returned Agatha, "thou art an honest man."

"I swear it by all the saints," said Matthew, earnestly; "'tis this which has brought me to

thee, for I would not peril my soul by destroying the child."

"I tell thee again," remarked the doctress, "that if thou hadst the wish, it could not be done without working thy ruin. Listen: *the child is marked*: on the right shoulder and the left ear you will find a blue spot, which nothing can remove."

The steward stared.

"Ay," continued she, "you look aghast; but this has been my wont at such times; and I have been at many births, master steward. *The boy has my mark, and I never desert my children.*"

"Humph!" ejaculated the steward.

"Well, master steward," resumed the doctress, "what think ye of the matter now? You see, old wife as I be, I have my wits about me yet."

"By my beard," exclaimed Matthew, "I think thou hast. But, tell me, wilt thou help me to provide an honest pair who will call this child their own?"

“ First answer me one question : was your master’s daughter married to the youth he slew ? ”

“ I never doubted it.”

“ Then why does he wish to remove the child ? ”

“ I have already told you, mother, and am in no humour to answer any further questions. Tell me, at once, if you will undertake this matter, for I must be gone.”

“ Well, then,” said the doctress, “ I will see if it can be done ; but what am I to have for the service ? ”

“ You may leave that to my master,” replied the steward ; “ he hath a liberal hand, and will reward thee nobly.”

“ He hath a red hand,” observed the bel-dam ; “ and the blood of a murdered man cries aloud against him. He will taste of sorrow yet.”

“ I did not come to argue this with thee,” said Matthew, angrily.

“ Marry, no,” remarked the hag ; “ you

would rather hear how the boy may be got rid of. Give you good morning, old sir."

With these words she turned on her heel, and the steward, quitting the hut, proceeded homeward.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. VALENTINE'S EVE.

Nothing could exceed the rage of the knight on hearing the result of Matthew's mission. He by turns vowed vengeance on the hag and threatened his faithful servant with dismissal; so the steward, for a day or two, very wisely kept out of his way as much as possible, well knowing that such storms are seldom of long duration: to have said a word while it lasted would have added fuel to the flame; he therefore suffered it to exhaust itself before he ventured to place himself in the way of his master. One morning, however, he was summoned unexpectedly to the knight's apartment. He proceeded thither full of anxiety, and haunted by a thousand surmises. The knight was pacing up and down in one of his worst moods:

he was not violent, but sullen, and Matthew could perceive that there was a determination in his tone and manner which argued ill for the poor babe.

“Matthew,” said Sir Everhard, “I am resolved the brat shall no longer abide in my house;—dost thou hear me?”

“I do, noble sir,” answered the steward.

“And hearing, dost thou understand?” continued the knight, bending on his servant a look of deep and penetrating inquiry—“I do not think thou wouldst dare to tempt me ——”

“I am your poor servant, sir,” was the submissive rejoinder.

“Then hear me. I will have the bastard thrown into the Fleet, or the Thames—which would be the safer of the two?”

Matthew clasped his hands in anguish, and was about to commence a plea for the infant’s life, when the knight’s violent gestures sealed his lips.

“Traitor!” cried Sir Everhard, grasping the handle of his dagger, which he half unsheathed, “Is my bounty to be repaid thus?—have I che-

rished a viper, who would see me degraded in the eyes of mine own household? Already I fear the accursed birth is known to more than those whom I trusted; but woe to those who betray me."

He concluded this menace with a bitter and fearful oath, which we forbear to record, and which made the steward tremble for his own safety as well as for the child's. Nevertheless, he inwardly resolved to save its life, and invoked the aid of all the saints in the calendar to assist him in his design. Meanwhile his master continued to bend on him a look in which resentment and suspicion were strangely blended.

"Dost thou understand me, old man?" inquired the knight sternly. "Let me hear at once, thy decision, and then thou shalt hear mine, I promise thee."

"My gracious master," said the steward, his eyes filling with tears, "I would stand by you to the death; but for your honour's—for your soul's sake, think better of your purpose."

"Ha!" cried Sir Everhard, with a bitter

oath, "art thou playing the monk with me? and is a belted knight to receive a schooling from his varlet? By heaven! I could stab thee for thy pertness."

"Sir," said the steward, perceiving that further remonstrance would be vain, "I am yours while life lasts. I will do your bidding, though it lead me to the Elms. Spit on me, spurn, and drive me to ruin and death—Matthew Tyndall will never desert his benefactor."

"Spoken like a faithful servant," cried the knight, rejoiced at the change in his steward's demeanour; "beshrew me if I did not, for the first time in my life, suspect thy fidelity."

"You did me wrong, sir," said the dissembling steward; "I will do your bidding, come what may of it."

"'Tis well," continued the knight; "and now mark me: here are two powders, which thou wilt mingle with the night-drink of thy mistress and her maid. 'Tis a subtle thing, which will cast them into a deep sleep, and if it be given early, 'twill lull the brat to a slumber from which he will never wake: the rest I leave

to thy own wits. But," and he raised his forefinger with an air of admonition, and lowered his voice almost to a whisper,—“have a care how thou playest thy part, or I will have thy limbs torn in sunder. Roger shall assist thee. Dost thou hear me? Look to it craftily.”

With these words, the knight strode out of the apartment, leaving Matthew to ponder on the cruel part he was pledged to enact.

“So,” soliloquised the steward, eyeing the packets which he held in his hand, “this is to enable me to do my master’s bidding. Heaven help me! I am a lost man. I cannot now go back, and if I go on I ruin my soul for ever. Then I am to have as my helpmate to-night that wild youth, Roger, my master’s favourite servitor, who would cut my throat to please him; so that I know not how to avoid this damnable office. The blessed Virgin aid me in this dire strait, for I am at my wits’ end. Why should my master trust Roger in the business? the losel will some day betray him, for he loves strong drink, and is quarrelsome when in his cups. What can the knight see in

that scapegrace to trust him with such a terrible secret ?—Ah me !”

As the hours wore away the knight became impatient for the approach of darkness, while Matthew’s anxiety increased with the departure of day. Night came, and the steward performed his master’s commands with respect to the night-drink, which he conveyed himself to the Lady Isabel’s apartment. He had not seen her for many days previously. He entered, bearing a silver chalice on a gilt salver, which he presented to his beautiful and unhappy mistress with a trembling hand, but with an air of profound respect and attention. She closed the book she had been reading—(it was a copy of the ritual of the church, with illuminated capitals, executed by the hand of Reginald, and presented to her before their marriage)—and received the chalice from the hands of the steward, whose heart smote him as he looked on her wan but lovely features, to which sorrow, deep settled sorrow, had given an unearthly tinge. She observed his confusion, and said with a smile of angelic sweetness,

“ You are ill, Matthew.”

“ My sweet mistress,” replied the steward, in a faltering voice, for he felt as if choking,—“ I am an old man, and my hand waxes unsteady.”

“ Then why trouble thyself to wait on me, good Tyndall, at this late hour ?” said the lady. “ Barbara can attend to all my wants : they are few, and, alas ! they would be fewer,”—a deep drawn sigh seemed to relieve her overcharged heart,—“ but for this precious legacy of my mur——.” She checked herself, and pointed to her child, which lay in a sweet slumber in its little cot.

Matthew bent over the cot and gazed intently on the sleeping infant, until he could discern it no longer through the tears which filled his eyes.

“ Alas ! alas !” said the old man, in an agony of remorse, “ so young, and fatherless.”

The Lady Isabel’s grief was too deep for tears, or she would have wept with the steward, whose distress she misinterpreted. Matthew was overwhelmed by his feelings, and it is probable he would have betrayed himself,

had not the maid Barbara entered to prepare her mistress for the night. The old man, glad to escape, bowed low to his unhappy mistress, and as he passed out he heard a voice whisper in his ear, "Woe unto them whose feet are swift to do mischief, and whose hands are ready to shed innocent blood."

At length the hour came for the execution of the knight's cruel purpose. Night had sunk down, dark and gloomy upon the city; the streets were deserted, for it was bitter cold, and a shower of snow and sleet was beginning to fall. The steward proceeded to the apartment communicating with that occupied by the Lady Isabel, where he waited, as he had been instructed, in an agony of suspense and apprehension.

"God, in his infinite mercy, help me to save the babe!" ejaculated the old man. "I have hit on a plan whereby I may balk that ribald Roger: Heaven grant that I may succeed; for if I fail, the child is lost, and my soul is Satan's."

A violent gust of wind at this moment dashed

the sleet against the large latticed window, and as the storm howled around the building, it seemed to the steward's ear like the shrieks of persons in distress.

“Jesu Maria!” muttered the superstitious old man; “it is the spirit of the murdered Reginald calling for vengeance on his destroyer.” Then sinking on his knees and burying his face in his hands, he muttered in a voice half choked by grief and terror, “Peace, peace, unhappy shade: *I* have not wronged thee!” then he murmured snatches of the psalm *Salvum me fac, Deus, &c.* Fear and distress had well nigh driven him frantic. Suddenly footsteps were heard, the hangings were disturbed, and Sir Everhard Champnes appeared. Matthew sprang to his feet, and prepared to receive the burthen which he bore, and which was half hidden in the folds of his gown.

“The witch is no liar,” said the knight, uncovering the child which he held in his arms, and approaching a table on which a taper was burning, “See, there are the marks she spoke

of; but, this night past, and they will no longer blot the 'scutcheon of my house.'

Matthew looked on the pretty babe in silence; he feared to speak, lest some unguarded expression might betray him. He saw the mark on the lobe of the child's ear, as if made with the finger and thumb, and gently removing its night-dress, he perceived that a similar one had been made on its plump shoulder. The child appeared as if in a trance; its chubby cheek was flushed, and its gentle breathing was inaudible. The steward next turned his eyes on his master, the wildness of whose glance savoured of insanity. Far from exhibiting any sign of remorse, he appeared to feel a quiet satisfaction at the part he was performing; his countenance was ashy-pale, his eye gleamed with supernatural brightness, and his lip was curled with a smile of the bitterest malice. Matthew dared not utter a word; it might have provoked the knight to strangle the child as it lay in his arms.

"Here, take the brat," said Sir Everhard,

delivering the infant to the steward: "Roger has a sack and a stone, which will send it at once to the bottom of the river. Away! and let me not look on thee again until all is over. Pshaw! thou old fool, why dost thou tremble so?"

Matthew took the child in silence and quitted the room. "Now, for the trial," thought he: "fool though I be, I may yet save the infant's life."

Five minutes afterwards, accompanied by Roger, he was proceeding down Fleet Street, in darkness and in silence. The old man's mind was too much occupied to allow him to speak, while his companion kept silence from fear of the watch. It was the eve of St. Valentine; the day had been intensely cold; the snow was falling fast, and the creaking signs and vanes on the house-tops kept time to the howling of the wind. They arrived at Fleet Bridge before a single word was exchanged, and then, as they turned on to the quay which skirted the stream, Matthew broke silence.

“ Roger,” said he, “ this service is somewhat perilous : what, if the watch should discover and seize us ? ”

“ Move further down and speak lower,” was his companion’s reply. “ The tide is down, and the stream is deeper opposite the monastery and no one can be abroad there at this hour—the spot is lonely. Strange work this,” he muttered to himself, “ on St. Valentine’s eve.”

“ I fancy I hear voices,” said the old man, feigning alarm.

“ Where ? ” asked Roger, anxiously peering around him, and listening between the pauses of the wind.

“ They are behind us,” said Matthew, glad to perceive that his *ruse* was taking effect.

Roger stood still and listened again. “ It is the watchman on the Fleet tower calling ten,” said he : “ go on.”

“ Hark ’e, Roger,” whispered the steward.

“ What ? ”

“ Give me thy bag and the stone.”

“ Here, then—thou wilt not be able to carry both.”

“ Whist ! I fear we are tracked, and that some one is on our traces. Do thou wait here and keep watch, while I go farther down and cast in the brat.”

“ No, no, that will not do,” said Roger, earnestly ; “ I dare not see thee out of my sight. My master charged me to see it cast in with mine own eyes.”

It was well for the steward that the darkness did not allow his companion to notice the effect of this intimation. “ Alas ! ” thought he, “ the babe, then, is lost ! ”

“ What art thou muttering to thyself, Gaffer ? ” inquired Roger, in an impudent and impatient tone ? “ and why dost thou hesitate ? art afeard ? If so, give the child to me, and keep watch while I take it lower down.”

“ Hold ! ” said Matthew, dissembling his anxiety and chagrin : “ Do *thou* keep watch.”

At that moment the tramp of feet was distinctly heard, and a party of the night-watch emerged from Bride Lane, and proceeded in the direction of the bridge. Matthew and his companion had just time to throw them-

selves behind a large balk of timber which lay on the quay, where, aided by the darkness, they were effectually skreened from observation. The sergeant of the watch, however, fancying he heard a noise in that direction, called upon his men to stand, and a surly "Who goes there?" was thrice repeated. It was answered by the echoes of the surrounding buildings and the howling of the wind.

"Some of your river thieves come ashore to look for a stray spar or cable," said one of the watch.

"It's of no use running after them," remarked another; "they have as many hiding holes as a water-rat."

"Silence!" cried the sergeant in a tone of authority. "On to Shoe Lane,—mine host of the Cock and Flagon must look to his company there."

The watch proceeded on their way, and Matthew and his companion giving them time to get out of ear-shot, crept from their hiding-place. This incident appeared to have shaken Roger's resolution; for, to the infinite satis-

faction of the steward, he now volunteered to remain on the watch at this spot, and give the alarm if any one approached, by whistling softly.

Old Matthew, delighted at this sudden turn of affairs, and fearing that some unlucky crotchet might induce his companion to alter his mind, hurried away with his precious burthen, mentally invoking the aid of all the saints in the calendar. He was soon lost to the eyes of Roger, amidst the deep gloom in which the neighbourhood was wrapped.

The steward reached the house of the merchant Furnival, which he had reconnoitred the day before, when he carefully placed the child on the step near the gate. "God help thee, poor child!" exclaimed he. Grasping the bag which contained the huge stone, he threw it with all his might into the stream; then ringing the merchant's bell violently, he hurried away from the spot.

"Away, Roger!" whispered he to his companion, whom he soon regained. — "Away! some one is stirring; there was a ringing at

the gate of a house near which I stopped, and I fear they heard the splash in the stream." Roger needed no second bidding to hurry with the old man out of the neighbourhood.

They were soon in the presence of their master, who was waiting in great anxiety to know the result of their adventure. Sir Everhard lauded their zeal and fidelity, and dismissed them for the night. Roger repaired to the buttery to drown reflection in a cup of strong drink; while the steward hastened to his chamber, where, on his knees, he supplicated Heaven to save him from the sin of murder, and protect the life of the unfortunate child.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEATH BED.

THE next morning there was dainty food for the gossips of Bride Lane and the neighbourhood. It was reported that a beautiful child, wrapped in a sound sleep, had been left at Master Furnival's gate, and that that benevolent man, in the confidence of a spotless life, despising the stories which might be circulated by the tongue of scandal, had caused the infant to be conveyed into his house and tended with the utmost care and solicitude. Those who knew the heart of that kind being, his many deeds of charity, his justice and integrity as a merchant, were not surprised at the act; it was only the envious and the illiberal who made it a matter of wonderment,

and some of these even went so far as to hint that John Furnival had good and sufficient reasons for his attention to the poor foundling. True philanthropy, however, is not to be scared by such bugbears, and the worthy merchant, conscious that he was performing the part of a practical Christian, continued to bestow every possible care and attention upon his *protégée*: a healthy nurse was hired, and the infant thrived under that hospitable roof, where all was peace and happiness. Far different was the scene at the house of Sir Everhard Champnes. To paint the settled gloom and sullenness of the knight, the heart-rending agony of his bereaved daughter, and the anxiety and disquiet of the worthy but timid old steward, is beyond our powers, and we must leave them to the imaginations of those who have witnessed these passions of the human mind when in the ascendant.

The gossip to which the finding of the child had given rise soon subsided, and made room for some other and newer subject. It never reached the ears of Sir Everhard at all, for

he had shut himself up, and refused to commune with any one besides his confidential servants, upon whom was imposed the task of watching the Lady Isabel, whose grief gave way to a settled melancholy, more distressing to those who witnessed it than the loudest complaint.

The knight daily became more morose and gloomy: he went not near his daughter, but kept closely to his own chamber, and seemed to have determined to shut out the world entirely. At length a violent fever attacked him, and for some days threatened his life. A good constitution, and the care of Father Thomas, the priest of St. Dunstan's, restored him to comparative health, but the fever of his mind still raged. The visits of the priest afforded to the Lady Isabel an opportunity of seeking advice and counsel; but she carefully abstained from any reflections upon her father. She announced her intention of taking the veil, and Father Thomas promised that he would assist her in her views, and communicate with the prioress of St. Helen's, in

the ward of Bishopsgate Within. The ecclesiastic was not without feeling for the unfortunate lady, but he had another and a stronger motive: the knight had great possessions, and if his daughter embraced the life of a recluse, the church would be enriched by many a broad acre: he had power over Sir Everhard enough for that, and therefore gladly aided Isabel in her design.

Not to tire the reader with a detail of all that took place between the unhappy lady and her fierce parent, we have merely to record that, on Quinquagesima Sunday, the Benedictine Nuns of St. Helen's received into their sisterhood the beautiful widow of Reginald Chychelye, weighed down by grief too deep for utterance, and beyond all earthly hope of alleviation. Then, and not till then, did the knight awake to a sense of his condition. Alone and childless, surrounded only by the menials of his household, Sir Everhard now perceived that he had rendered himself wretched. Such a mind, when it has vented its worst on others, always turns upon

itself. Grief, remorse, and despair took possession of him, and harrowed up his very soul. Sleeping or waking, the images of the murdered Reginald and his child were constantly before him. Strange voices whispered in his ear and denounced him as a murderer; and he would sometimes ring violently at midnight for his confidential servants, who came to his bedside in alarm and terror, to find their master in one of those terrible fits into which the horror of his visions had cast him. Then he would occasionally walk in his sleep; and some wild youths returning home very late one night, reported that they had seen, by the light of the moon, in the gallery of Sir Everhard's house, a man using violent gestures, and muttering threats, as they supposed, against some person below. This story was not credited, but an event which took place soon afterwards proved it to be too true.

One fine night, a party of citizens, who had been at a christening near Temple Bar, and

had prolonged their merry-making to a late hour, were proceeding to their homes down Fleet Street in gleeful mood. The full moon was high in the heavens, and glistened on the vanes and weathercocks as they were fanned by the gentle night wind. Gables and chimneys stood out in fine relief against the blue canopy of heaven, and the high tower of St. Dunstan's church, with the buildings of the Temple, frowned high above the inferior tenements of the neighbourhood. As the gossips proceeded on their way, they talked, in the fulness of their hearts, of all the events of the day; of their entertainer, and the good things he had placed before them; of the beef, wine, and ale that had been consumed by the guests, and a multitude of other things with which people beguile the time as they trudge homeward. Suddenly, however, the confabulation ceased; the citizens had arrived opposite the house of Sir Everhard Champnes, and, as if by common consent, there was a pause amongst them.

“ Whist ! speak low,” said one in a whisper, crossing himself as he spoke ; “ there is the house of the Knight of ‘ Chance-Medley.’ ”

“ Pass on, neighbour,” said another ; “ I always feel as if in an ague fit when in this neighbourhood, since that horrible night when the young student was murdered.”

“ And I, too,” remarked a third : “ the young men shake their fists as they pass by, and the old ones their heads. Ah ! it was a sad——”

“ Holy Virgin ! ” cried the first speaker, in a voice tremulous with terror, “ look there ! ”

He pointed upwards with his finger to the gallery before-mentioned, in which stood a half-clad figure, struggling apparently with some invisible assailant.

“ God be merciful to us ! ” muttered the citizen ; “ it is the knight wrestling with Sathanas.”

In the belief that the knight was really trying a fall with the Prince of darkness, they would have fled from the sight, but terror

bound them to the spot. Meanwhile the figure in the gallery struggled violently, and the citizens heard him cry, in a shrill voice,

“Down with thee, base groom! down with thee, varlet!” Then he leant over the balustrade, as if attempting to cast something from it, crying out, “Let go, damned felon! what, ho! Matthew! bring thy partisan—he will escape!” With these words he made another effort, and overreaching himself, fell heavily into the court-yard.

“Jesu Maria!” cried the citizens in a breath, while the blood froze in their veins, and their knees smote each other: “it is the knight! he must be dashed to pieces!”

A hollow groan, bespeaking intense suffering, resounded from the court-yard.

The noise of the miserable man’s fall aroused the neighbourhood; alarmed faces appeared at the casements, presenting a ludicrous aspect in their night gear, and awakened out of their first sleep. The watch hurried to the spot, the court-yard was entered, and a hideous spectacle presented itself. Stretched on the

stone pavement lay the wretched knight, groaning in anguish, a mass of blood and bruises.

Then, amidst the tumult of voices, were heard the comments of those who had been drawn to the spot.

“It is the just judgment of God!” exclaimed some; others cried, “Satan has seized his soul and jerked his body from the gallery!” while a few pushed their way through the crowd and looked with pity on the mutilated figure of the sufferer.

“Bear him into the house,” cried some of the citizens, “and send for the leech.”

At that moment old Matthew and the other servants, awakened by the tumult, rushed into the court-yard.

“Make room, make room,” cried the steward, elbowing his way through the throng. “Let me reach my master—where is he?”

“Thou wilt soon be without a master, Gaffer,” said a rough-looking man, pointing to the figure of Sir Everhard, which still lay extended on the pavement, for he seemed past all human aid. “Look there!”

Matthew snatched a lantern from the hands of a bystander, and held it to the face of his master. He shuddered as he looked on that once comely visage, now writhen and distorted by agony. The eyes of the knight were fixed and open, his jaw had fallen, and the only signs of remaining life were the convulsive twitching of his limbs and the quivering of his lower lip.

“Run to Father Thomas’s lodgings, Roger,” said the steward, “and entreat him to come hither; in the mean while I will remove my poor master into the house. Help me, good citizens, if ye be Christian men.”

The knight was lifted from the pavement and borne into the house, groaning heavily, and then some of the citizens left the courtyard, but many lingered about the spot till a late hour.

Father Thomas was soon by the bed-side of the suffering knight. Imperfect as surgical skill was at that period, the priest soon perceived that nothing short of a miracle could save the patient’s life: he had sustained

severe injury of the spine, his legs were broken, and his whole body frightfully contused: a man of less stalwart frame would have been killed outright. He was speechless, and replied to the few interrogatories of the priest by signs and groans. Father Thomas administered an opiate, and when he perceived that the sufferer had been thereby relieved, he quitted the house, bidding the steward acquaint him, without loss of time, if any unfavourable symptoms appeared.

The hours wore heavily away; the knight appeared to slumber, but occasionally uttered low, inarticulate mutterings. Matthew had turned his hour-glass thrice, when he felt overpowered by fatigue: he fell asleep in the huge arm-chair by his master's bed-side, and when he awoke the bright beams of an April sun were streaming across the chamber. Sir Everhard lay as if in a trance, and the steward shuddered as he beheld the horrible change which had taken place in his master's features. By degrees he seemed to be recovering from his lethargy, and as the morning advanced he re-

cognised the old man and asked for drink. Matthew assisted him with the cup, and when he had taken a long draught, he breathed heavily and fell back on his pillow.

When the priest entered he found his patient in a state of delirium, which soon increased to such a pitch that he would have risen from his bed but for his broken limbs.

“My son,” said the priest, earnestly, “calm yourself, or nought can save you.”

“Who calls?” said the knight, attempting to rise. “Psha! ’tis Isabel clamouring for her child. I tell thee, it was not *I* that took it.”

Matthew, by command of the priest, gently restrained him from rising.

“Go, then,” he continued, as if addressing his daughter, “a nun’s cowl would become thee well. Take away that brat, Matthew.”

“My dearest master,” said the steward, weeping, “vex not yourself with these things: your life’s in danger.”

Sir Everhard turned a haggard look upon

his servant. "Life—life—life," said he, repeating the word several times; "what is life, sirrah?" Then making another effort to rise, he cried out, "Well shot, my arbalister! not a nail in his brigandine is firmer driven! Hurrah! forward pikes and bills!"

"Alas! alas!" whispered Matthew to the priest, "he is raving of some passage of arms in Picardy in his younger days. I have often heard him tell that story of the little cross-bowman who cunningly shot the French knight at the postern tower."

The knight sunk back on his pillow, and his hard breathing denoted the violence of his exertion: his broad and ample chest swelled like a billow, his eyes glared fiercely, and the foam gathered on his lips. The priest regarded him intently for some moments, and then determined to administer another opiate. This had the desired effect, and towards evening Sir Everhard awoke and appeared calm and collected, but it was the result of that prostration of strength which announces the approaching dissolution of the patient. The

priest perceived this, and did not hesitate to communicate his apprehensions to the dying man, bidding him first dispose of his earthly possessions. Matthew was therefore despatched for Elias Crane, the notary of St. Bride's Lane, who came in all haste, his inkhorn, as usual, slung around his neck, and a small scroll of parchment in his hand.

The priest silently motioned him to take a seat in a large chair by the bed-side of the dying knight, which he obeyed with the air of a man ill at ease. No sooner, however, had he done so than Sir Everhard started up in horror and affright.

"Away with thee!" he cried, "away! I thought I had slain thee; the wings of Sathan must have upheld thee in thy fall! I know thee, thou dog! though thou hast doffed thy tippet."

"I cry you mercy, noble sir," said Crane, rising and gazing at the knight, with a look which partook both of wonder and deference. "I am Elias Crane, the notary: everybody knows me."

The knight made an effort to spring forward and clutch the speaker by the throat.

“Accursed dog!” he cried, in a hoarse and feeble voice, “would I had the strength to strangle thee! What, ho! Matthew! Roger! cut me off this fellow’s ears, and throw him from the window!” With these words he again sunk back, exhausted by the effort, and breathing with difficulty.

The priest here advanced and stood before Crane, so as to conceal him from the view of the sufferer.

“Remain behind me,” said he softly, “and carefully note down his last wishes; he cannot last long.”

The notary made a sign of acquiescence, and remained shrouded from the view of the knight, who, looking on the priest, seemed to be recovering from the effect of his exertion.

“Ah!” sighed he; “it was his *spirit*! and thou hast exorcised it, good father. Now do I perceive all! ’Twas his shade which I essayed to cast from the gallery, and it hath brought me to this pass.”

He groaned in anguish, and cast on the priest a look of intense misery.

“My son,” said Father Thomas, taking the trembling hand of the wretched man, “suffer not these phantasies to distract your thoughts, but turn them towards Him who ——”

As he spoke, he bent over the knight, and in doing so, exposed Crane, whose head appeared above the priest’s shoulder. The patient leaped convulsively in his bed, and cried in a piteous voice, which well accorded with his agonized look,

“Ha! ’tis there again! Look! look! ’tis mopping and mowing over your shoulder, father! Oh, let me die,—but drive away that grim visitor.”

“Unhappy man,” said the priest, in a tone of deep commiseration, “there is no shade near thy bed; none but Christian men are here. No one is near thee but myself, thy servant, and the notary, who comes to make record of thy last wishes, for (here his voice subsided to a whisper) thou hast not an hour to live.”

Sir Everhard turned his haggard eyes upon the speaker, and then glanced fearfully at Crane, who almost doubted his own corporeal substance.

“ I will be still, father,” said the dying man. “ I will not start again, though the fiend himself should rise.” Then addressing the notary, he continued, “ Come hither, old man — still nearer — there — seat thyself and listen.” (Crane drew his chair close to the bed-side, and dipping his pen in the inkhorn, unrolled his parchment.) “ First, *I give to the priory and convent of*” — he paused, and drawing a long inspiration, laid his emaciated hand upon the notary’s arm; then his eyes wandered around the apartment, lingering for a moment on the thoughtful features of the priest and the tearful face of his steward. Suddenly he cast them again on the parchment.

“ Ha !” he cried, starting convulsively, “ thou art using *blood*, old man !—*blood*. See ! see ! thy ink is red, and that little child is dabbling the parchment with its tiny fingers ! Away

with thee ! away — 'tis sorcery ! aoint thee, fiend !”

With these words he laughed hysterically, sunk back on the bed, and drew the coverlid over his face. Crane had started up on his feet, overturning the parchment, which lay on the floor ; the knight remained still, as if he had fallen into a fit.

Matthew burst into an agony of tears, and rushing to the bed-side, kneeled down and gently withdrew the coverlid, disclosing the pallid features of his master. The hand of death had stricken him at that awful moment. and the steward looked upon a corpse !

THE FOSTER-SON.

A LEGEND OF

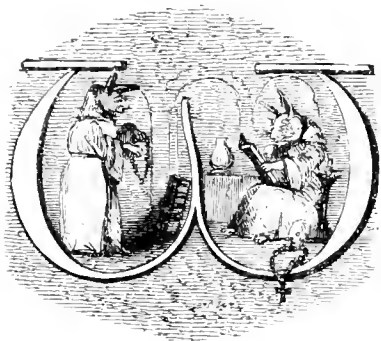
THE WARD OF FARRINGTON EXTRA.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE FOSTER-SON.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRODIGAL AND HIS SISTER.



WE must now lead the reader back to the hospitable dwelling of the worthy merchant, John Furnival. Years slipped quietly away, but, since the night on which the child had been deposited at his gate, Fortune seemed to have taken him under her especial patronage and protection. He had always been accounted "a lucky man, as the world goes," by his neighbours, but now good luck seemed to meet him at every turn. His busi-

ness thrived exceedingly, his ships made most successful voyages to many parts of the world, and everything prospered in his hands. It is recorded, to his honour and credit, that as he waxed wealthy, his heart did not contract, and that his charitable donations to the poor increased with his riches. The poor foundling had been treated in every respect as his own child, and well did he repay the kindness of his benefactor. Valentine, for such was the name which had been given him, the merchant having stood sponsor for him at the baptismal font, loved his foster-father as a parent, for he had indeed received more than a parent's kindness and attention from that excellent man. We have before mentioned that Master Furnival had a son and a daughter of his own, two creatures upon whom he doted with all a father's fondness. Anna Furnival inherited the beauty of her deceased mother, but she possessed the good temper and benevolent heart of her father. Her brother Richard, though not destitute of generosity, was haughty, petulant, and resentful, and looking forward to the

inheritance of that wealth, the greater portion of which he knew must be his, he felt contempt for trade, and, spite of the remonstrances of the merchant, as he grew older this distaste increased. He had been educated with Valentine, who, though he had no great inkling for "business," had in gratitude applied himself to the duties of the counting-house.

In the year 1446, Richard Furnival came of age, Valentine, the foundling, being then sixteen, when the merchant's house for a whole week was a scene of profuse hospitality. It was not until then that Master Furnival became fully aware of the extent and quality of his son's acquaintance. The careful father now perceived, with some dismay, that he had, by over-indulgence, spoiled his boy. Whispers had sometimes reached his ears that Richard had been seen in the company of many wild and worthless young men; but when he mentioned the rumour to the young prodigal, the fond father easily received his excuses, and readily believed that his son had been belied.

Now, however, the film was removed from his eyes, and the merchant perceived, too late, alas ! for remedy, that his son was launched on that treacherous sea on which so many frail barks have been tossed and wrecked. Remonstrance he found was received haughtily, and sometimes with vague and indistinct mutterings, the meaning of which he was soon given to understand, was, that Valentine was suspected of speaking to his prejudice, and circulating the stories which had reached his father's ears. The flame, once kindled in such a breast, soon became uncontroulable ; and Richard Furnival did not hesitate to charge his foster-brother openly with those acts of domestic treason. Valentine repelled the charge with indignation, and appealed to the old merchant, whose disquietude was thereby greatly increased. But there was one to whom this growing dislike of Richard was a source of much greater uneasiness. Anna Furnival had grieved at her brother's violent and untractable career ; she had observed his haughty bearing and contemptuous conduct towards

Valentine, and the thought that anything might occur to cause her foster-brother to quit the roof which had sheltered him so long, and under which they had all grown up together, caused her infinite pain and anxiety; in a word, Valentine's tall and comely person, (his stature exceeded Richard's, though he was five years younger,) his manly and graceful carriage, and his affectionate and respectful behaviour towards her father, all declared in his favour, and contrasted so strongly with the whole demeanour of her brother, that the poor maiden, though scarcely herself aware of it, was in love with the foundling boy. Of this, Richard seemed to be aware, at least, he was perfectly sensible of his sister's evident partiality for her foster-brother, and it seemed to increase his dislike of Valentine, whom he now scarcely ever deigned to notice. The old merchant endeavoured to reconcile his son to Valentine, but he soon relinquished the attempt, and then his next care was to contrive the means of keeping them as much as

possible out of the sight of each other. There was not much difficulty in this, for Richard spent the greater part of his time among his wild companions, while Valentine was fully occupied by his attention to Master Furnival's business. His evenings were spent in the society of Anna Furnival, for whom he felt more than a brother's attachment, though, in the simplicity of his boyish heart, he had never suspected himself of being in love with that beautiful and gentle girl. It not unfrequently happens that such a couple only make the discovery when some misfortune or separation threatens them, and this was precisely the case with our young folks.

One fine summer's evening, after the business of the day, Valentine ascended, with a light and joyous step, the stair which led to the room usually occupied by his beloved Anna. To his great delight, he found her alone, engaged in embroidering one of those singular horned head-dresses, or coiffures, which figured so conspicuously among the female costumes in the reign of our sixth Henry.

“ My pretty Anna,” said the youth, as he bounded into the room and kissed her fair cheek with the licence of long and familiar acquaintance, “ your father is gone to the ward-mote this evening, and I am come to pass an hour with my little beadswoman.”

“ Indeed, sir,” replied the maiden, ceasing for a moment from her work, and drawing up her pretty head with an air of coquetry.

“ Yes, indeed,” said Valentine, imitating her tone and manner ; “ and what are you working at so busily, sister Anna ? What old lady’s head-gear art thou fashioning ? Mass ! it looks like the horns on the head of Aaron, in the porch of the Blackfriars.”

“ It is a coif for my godmother, Basing,” remarked Anna, plying her needle vigorously.

“ O’ my word, a strange piece of finery,” continued her lover, drawing a chair and seating himself by her side ; “ but, pri’thee, cease working, and talk to me ; I would fain make thee my privy councillor.”

“ Well, sir,” rejoined the maiden, relinquish-

ing her work, and smiling sweetly, "what have you to say now?"

"I' faith, not much; but I have thoughts of leaving your and my good father, Anna, and seeking mine own fortune."

An expression of sadness instantly clouded the face of the poor girl as she heard this avowal.

"He loves me but as a sister," thought she.

"Besides," continued he, "I feel that I have too long lived on the bounty of the best of men."

Anna could hear no more. A sound like the rushing of water filled her ears, her heart beat thickly, and her colour fled.

"It is very warm," she remarked, affecting indifference, and rising from her seat.

Valentine led her to the window, and threw open the casement. A delicious southerly wind fanned her fair face and disturbed her auburn hair, which her plain and simple head-dress but slightly restrained. Valentine thought he had never seen her look so beautiful, and as her

colour returned he gazed upon her with a look of such ardent love and admiration that those features, but a moment before so pale and wan, brightened into scarlet.

Anna turned from the intensity of her lover's gaze and looked from the window. Immediately below was the rapid stream of Fleet Brook, bounded by the venerable walls of the city, above which rose the huge conventual pile of building, the Blackfriars' Monastery; beyond, standing out clear and distinctly against the blue and cloudless sky, rose the towers of St. Paul's Cathedral. To the right was an open prospect, studded with a few buildings and windmills, the distance bounded by the Surrey hills. Afar off, London Bridge, with its dwellings and towers, spanned the river, which glowed in a July sunset. Boats were passing to and fro on the river, and the citizens were enjoying the evening breeze after a sultry summer's day.

"What a lovely evening!" remarked Valentine, passing his arm around the waist of his

beloved, and looking down on the scene. "All seem happy — those pigeons especially: they have been wheeling around St. Paul's this last half hour, and now they have settled on the tower, each by the side of his mate ——"

As he spoke, his arm tightened around the waist of the maiden.

"Have done, sirrah!" cried she, affecting indignation, but, at the same time, opposing but a feeble resistance to her lover's embrace; "my maid will be here anon."

The small taper fingers which essayed to remove the arm of Valentine were disengaged from his wrist, and grasped in his large, white, manly hand. How long this fond dalliance lasted we have no inclination to record; such of our readers as are lovers may supply the omission, while those who are not would merely smile at the recital.

As the lovers thus stood looking on the noble prospect before them, they perceived that a boat, which had been advancing up the stream, was now pulled towards the shore. It con-

tained three persons besides the waterman. It soon entered the Fleet, and came to the landing-place near Master Furnival's house.

The quick eye of Valentine soon recognised one of the party as Richard Furnival.

"Dearest Anna," said he, "it is your brother, with two of his friends; they are about to land."

"The Virgin forbid!" exclaimed Anna, looking from the window on the group below. "Ha!" she continued, "it is Richard; and he has brought with him that odious Robert Poynings, whom, he says, is a gentleman of fair estate. What think you, Valentine, of that red-haired youth, who is stepping from the boat? Would he make a proper husband for your Anna—eh?"

Here Valentine in his turn became pale. He had never dreamed of a rival.

"A—yes—a—I can scarcely tell," stammered the youth. "Is it not the gentleman who came here last Lammas?"

"The same," replied the maiden; "he hath

a comely figure, and would make a proper man-at-arms."

Valentine looked very blank at this remark, but he dissembled his vexation, and observed drily,—

"And he hath very red hair, and squints like the Vice in a morality!"

Anna laughed, and showed her pretty, white, even teeth. "Pri'thee, speak more respectfully of my future husband, sirrah," said she with mock dignity. "Only think of your sister, Anna, with a husband of some hundred nobles a-year, with the prospect, too, of being some day Lady Poynings!"

"Ah, now do I see that thou art jesting, my little banterer," cried Valentine, laughing outright.

"Whist!" said Anna, earnestly; "my brother is talking to his companions on the quay; see, they are leaving him, and he appears to be coming in alone. Let us part, dear Valentine, it will anger him if he sees us together."

Valentine needed no second bidding, and,

imprinting a kiss on the fair cheek of his beloved, he hastily quitted the apartment, while Anna returned to her seat and resumed her embroidery. She had not been thus engaged many minutes, when Richard Furnival entered with a flushed countenance, and out of breath in running up the stairs. He threw himself into a chair, doffed his cap, and wiped the perspiration from his brow. Notwithstanding that his nose was somewhat short and *retroussée*, the countenance of Richard Furnival was handsome and intelligent. His forehead was smooth and clear, and bright auburn hair clustered around his temples; his eyes were a dark hazel, and sparkled with vivacity, and a short upper lip, disclosing, when he smiled, a row of white teeth, gave to his whole countenance a careless and saucy air.

“ Well, Anna,” said he, twirling his cap, and evidently mustering up resolution to commence the attack, “ is Poynings to be my brother-in-law ? ”

His sister looked up from her work, and answered, with apparent indifference, “ No ! ”

“ Zounds ! ” cried the youth, peevishly, “ you do not mean what you say ? ”

“ But I do,” was the reply, in the same careless tone.

“ Do you mean to tell me that your mind is made up, and that you will refuse such a match ? ”

The maiden raised her head again, and answered, in the same tone of assumed indifference, “ I do ! ” the nervous tapping of her foot, however, showed that she was much annoyed by these questions.

Richard muttered a malediction, and strode up and down the apartment whistling, as if perplexed by his sister’s taciturnity. At length, he spake again :—

“ Hark ’e, Anna ; I shrewdly suspect you have given your heart to some other man. Look you that it is not the fellow whom my father hath fed and nurtured, to my disquiet, this many a year.”

“ And what if it should be ? ” asked the high-spirited girl, reddening with resentment.

Richard was a little surprised at her tone and manner, but the last cup of wine he had taken that afternoon had given him sufficient resolution to go through with the scene.

“ Anna,” said he, in a cool determined tone, “ it must not—it *shall* not be so. We understand each other; persevere in your determination, and it will work his ruin — ay, his death ! ”

Anna left off working, and bent on her brother a look which caused him to cast his eyes on the ground in shame and confusion.

“ Richard,” said she, in a serious and reproachful tone, “ thou art surely distraught ;— what evil spirit has put thee in this savage mood ? I have long thought thee wayward and wanton, but I looked not to see thee turn thus, and ” ——

“ Thy preaching, Anna, will avail nothing,” cried the youth, raising his eyes, and looking angrily at her. “ Are mine and my father’s hopes to be blighted by this beggar ? ”

Anna Furnival started on her feet : the

epithet *beggar* stung her to the quick. The blood of her deceased mother, who was reckoned among her neighbours a woman of high spirit, rushed to her cheek, and her mild eyes seemed to lose their softness as the tide of anger set in.

“Sirrah!” she cried, making a menacing gesture with her little white fist. “Begone! you shall not use this language here. He whom you thus vilify does not deserve your reproaches, and it is well for you that he is not present to hear them.”

Richard snapped his fingers contemptuously.

“Ay,” she continued, “snap your fingers, sirrah; you can show your mettle here, where there is only a poor weak girl to rebuke you; but know, young man, I am not to be terrified by your threats. I care little for the hopes of a hair-brained boy who is led by his wild companions, and, as I know my father would never have me wed one whom I abhor, I tell thee I have given my heart to Valentine.”

The ruddy, saucy face of Richard Furnival became pale as death with intensity of passion on hearing this, to him, too candid avowal. He bent on his sister a look of the deadliest malice, which made her quail with apprehension ; then suddenly advancing, he grasped her arm and dragged her to the window.

“Thou giddy fool !” said he, wrathfully ; “I could strangle thee for thine obstinacy. See’st thou that grim stage yonder ?”

He pointed, as he spoke, to the ancient bridge in the distance, crowded with buildings, among which the traitors’ towers were grimly conspicuous : their then never-failing ornaments, about a dozen human heads, elevated upon long poles, rose high above the roof, and over them were several carrion crows, wheeling in circling eddies around their horrible banquet.

“See !” he cried, “*there is room enough on those towers for another head*, and I promise thee thy Valentine’s shall be there ere Candlemas !”

With these words he relinquished her arm and hastily quitted the room. Anna listened

to his footsteps as he descended the stairs, and as the sound ceased the poor maiden threw herself into a chair and released her over-charged heart by a violent flood of tears.



CHAPTER II.

THE SANCTUARY.

“What a rable of theeves, murtherers and malitious heynous traytors, and that in two places specially. The tone at the elbowe of the citie, the tother in the verie bowels.”

THE above sentences, uttered by the Duke of Buckingham, in his speech at the council, when Glo'ster wished to remove the young princes from the sanctuary of Westminster, give a vivid picture of those haunts of vice and crime, the sanctuaries of the middle ages. “One of these,” he remarks, “was at the elbow of the city,” (Westminster), the other “in the very bowels;” which latter was the famous sanctuary of St. Martin-le-Grand, comprising, as shown by honest Stow, the en-

tire area enclosed between Newgate Street on the south, Foster Lane on the east, Bull and Mouth Street and St. Ann's Lane on the north, and on the west by a number of crowded tenements occupied by inferior tradesmen and artificers. The existence of such a place in the heart of the city was a grievous evil, which long vexed the quietly-disposed citizens of London, and many ingenious attempts were made from time to time by the city authorities to show that the privilege was one of long use and custom, rather than of regal permission. But these efforts to dislodge and bring to justice felons who had sought shelter from the law within its precincts were stoutly resisted, and *quo warrantos* were met by the exhibition of charters of *inspeximus*, or recapitulations of former confirmations of the privileges of the deanery, "from the tyme of no mynde" back to the days of the Saxon monarchs.

However great the evil, the place afforded too fine a revenue to the priests to be yielded up. They let out lodgings to the sanctuary men at a high rate, and often seized upon

property which had been conveyed within the precincts by marauders, claiming the same as *waifs*, and as one of the rights of the franchise ; thus, when a man named Kneve, in the year 1416, stole a pix, a signet ring, and other valuables, and deposited the booty with a sanctuary man, the officers of the dean seized upon it as a waif left within the soke or franchise of the church.

In this human den, this moral cloaca, was an aggregation of all the crimes which afflict or insult society. Here were assembled villains of every grade and complexion, the murderer and the cutpurse, the fraudulent debtor and the unfrocked priest, the maker of false keys and the forger, the worker of counterfeit jewels and beads and the procurer of *alibis* and false evidence ; in fact, every denomination of rascality that could be congregated together, and which, on occasions of popular tumult, was poured forth to rob and pillage the peaceable and the wealthy.

The rights of the deanery of St. Martin had, from the earliest times, been firmly maintained,

and those who had the luck to be in possession of this lucrative franchise proved their fitness to contend for its privileges. Matthew Philip, alderman of London in 1439, determined to demand payment of a tax then made for the "sauf gard of Caleys," of the denizens of St. Martin's, when Richard Cawdry, the dean, laid his complaint before the king, who commanded that restitution should be made to those parties upon whose property the alderman had seized for noncompliance. This disagreement was afterwards adjusted, according to the ancient custom of the Londoners, over a hearty supper which Philip gave to the dean; upon which occasion the ecclesiastic exhibited writs of *alias* and *pluries*, with a letter from the king enjoining the citizens to respect the privileges of St. Martin. A short time after this event, as some officers of Newgate were conveying an offender from that prison to Guildhall, their prisoner was forcibly taken from them and borne into the sanctuary, when the sheriff's and other city officers repaired to the place and seized on all who had been concerned

in the outrage. Hereupon issue was joined, and much litigation ensued, but, in the end, the rights and privileges of the deanery were confirmed. One thing alleged by the dean in these proceedings is worthy of special notice : he stated that worshipful members of the corporation were the last who ought to complain of the privilege of sanctuary in St. Martin's, since of late years more than three hundred of them had sought shelter within its gates. Although, perhaps, there was more sarcasm than truth in this allegation, it is sufficient to show to what extent the privilege of sanctuary was then claimed.

Long after the Reformation, the precincts of St. Martin's were noted as the residence of fabricators and dealers in counterfeit plate and jewels, a celebrity which it had enjoyed in the reign of Edward the Fourth, by whose statutes relating to such work, this place was exempted, as forming no part of the city. Notwithstanding this, however, in 1447 the London goldsmiths extended their right of search for counterfeit plate among the goldsmiths in the

sanctuary. On this occasion, Cawdry, the dean, attended them, and seizing on some counterfeit wares, committed the makers to the prison of the sanctuary, by virtue of the privilege of *infangennetheof*, with which the franchise was, with many other rights, invested. But, to return to our story.

In one of the alleys on the north side of the sanctuary was a low tavern, or “bere howse,” known by the sign of the “Mayden Hed,” and kept by one Anthony Johnson. There was not a more noisy spot within the whole precinct; it was the haunt of the most desperate and worthless of those who had sought sanctuary. It constantly swarmed, like a hive, with the most abandoned wretches of both sexes, and, from prime to complin, the house of Toney Johnson, as he was called, rung with loud oaths, ribald songs, and the rattle of flagon and dice-box. The variations on these truly infernal airs were occasional brawls, in which blood was not unfrequently shed. Here, however, the deanery did not suffer, “blood-wyte,” or exemption from amercement for mur-

der therein committed, being one of the privileges of the franchise. In a word, the “Mayden Hed” was the very sublimation of the iniquity of the place.

One dark night, when the orgies of the frequenters of the “Mayden Hed” were at the highest, a stranger entered St. Christopher’s Alley, in which that most respectable tavern was situated. The place was pitchy dark, but a strong light was emitted from the long low window of the tavern, glazed with fragments of glass collected from a thousand different quarters, and containing in the centre the upper moiety of a representation of St. Catherine. The stranger essayed to take a peep into this pandemonion through the casement, but the steam from within covered the glass, and prevented all observation from persons without; he therefore walked to and fro for some time, looking in upon the strange assembly as he passed the door, whenever any one went in or out and exposed for a moment the interior of the den. The ground floor consisted of one large room, with a ceiling

scarcely high enough for a tall man to stand erect, and was supported by posts. The place was, as usual, swarming with company ; entthroats and cutpurses ; itinerant musicians ; fellows in the garb of monks, but with faces flushed with drinking, and of abominably sinister expression ; women with parti-coloured hoods ; sham cripples and beggars with simulated sores, were all bent on enjoying themselves while a farthing remained. Some were singing or bawling out obscene jests ; others were playing at cards or backgammon ; while a few looked on in a kind of vague stupor, having drunk until every sense but that of sight had been subdued. In a dark corner of the room might be seen a group of four savage-looking ruffians, concerting some plan of midnight robbery over a stoup of wine. Their cogitations were totally unheeded by those around them, and might have continued for some time longer, but for a dispute which arose on some matter connected with the subject of their discussion, when two of the group suddenly left their companions, and removed to a different part of the

room, near the window. One of these fellows was tall, and in his youth had evidently been a very handsome man, but his once comely visage and complexion had been disfigured by intemperance, and that habitual acquaintance with vice which gives to the finest face an expression infinitely more disagreeable than positive ugliness. The other man was a perfect contrast to his companion, being exceedingly short of stature. a broad-shouldered, thick-set knave, with a heavy sullen aspect, a large nose, which looked downward, and glowed at the tip like an escarbuncle, and an ill-shaped, vulgar mouth, with one tooth overhanging the lip, like the tusk of a wild boar. This fellow was the most daring ruffian and night-walker within the precincts of St. Martin's.

"I don't like that Kit Newis," said the tall man, throwing himself on a bench near the window; "he 's a sneaking hound, and would betray us to the dean's men for a stoup of wine."

"He had better not," remarked the thick-set man, playing as he spoke with the handle of a broad dudgeon dagger which depended from

his girdle. "Corpus Domini! if I thought he would, I'd slit his weasand."

"The best way is not to trust him at all," continued the other; "for if we do, we shall get a week's lodging in the dean's dungeon cellar, and lose the purse that's promised us. I once lay a week in that damnable place, where I caught an ague."

"Well, never mind that," rejoined the short man; "let us see how we can leave him out of our fellowship. I like not too many mates in this kind o' work; but let's have another pottle on the strength of what we have to receive for the job; for the devil a cross have I got in my pouch.—What ho! Toney, my old dragon, bring another pottle o' your best."

The burly figure of Toney Johnson waddled across the room and deposited on the table the wine which had been called for, holding forth at the same time his palm to receive the money.

"Out upon thee!" cried the ruffian; "I have paid thee all my coin to-night, and thou must now wait until I get more. I'll be out o' thy debt before even-song to-morrow."

“Hast thou no pawn, my valiant swashbuckler?” inquired the doubting landlord.

“By the mass, none!” cried the fellow, taking a draught, and making a sign for the querist to begone.

Toney waddled back to his bar and scored up the drink with a piece of chalk. “The rascals!” muttered he, “they are brewing some mischief to-night, and may find a lodging in the compter; they’re a pretty pair, and would become the gallows well.”

Meanwhile the two worthies resumed their conversation in a low tone. “Dost thou think this springald will come, Roger?” asked the stout ruffian.

“Ay, without doubt,” was the reply; “he is young, but he hath a stout stomach, and will be as good as his word.”

“By St. Martin, it would be a good jest if we enticed him here some night, and made free with that fair chain of gold he wears about his neck.”

“Thou art a greedy knave, Jack,” remarked the tall man; “thou art always burning to finger

everything that 's made of gold or silver. I have seen thee eye the church plate as a fox looks at a hen-roost. But let us see if this youth is come."

He rose from his seat, and going to the lattice, wiped with his sleeve the steam from one of the panes, and placing his eye close to the glass, looked into the court. Immediately afterwards he quitted the room.

The stranger who had been pacing up and down outside, faced about as the ruffian emerged from the tavern.

"I thought you had forgotten our meeting," remarked he somewhat peevishly.

"I cry your pardon, fair sir," was the reply. "I should have been with you before this, but there is some company within whom I would not have know of our business. There 's some danger in the job, withal, for master Cawdry, the dean, hath sworn that if a sanctuary man doth a felony without the precincts, he will give him up to the sheriffs."

"Pshaw!" cried the stranger, contemptuously, "I took thee for a fellow of better

stomach, but it seems thy heart fails thee ; or, perchance another noble or two would give thee mettle sufficient."

This was precisely what the ruffian intended by his observations as to the danger of the service for which he was required ; he therefore replied,—

"Look you, fair sir, I am a man of my word, and do not intend to shirk the business you wot of ; but I have a comrade who is sore pressed for arrears of lodging ——"

"Ay, ay," interrupted the stranger, in an angry and impatient tone, "I see thy object now :—here, hold thy hand and take this as earnest of what I can and will do, provided thou art trusty."

He placed three gold nobles in the hand of the ruffian, who clutched them greedily, and inquired,

"Are you sure, sir, that you can point out your enemy so that we may not mark the wrong man, for that might ruin us all. Such a mischance happened to Will Simpson, who killed the alderman's nephew in mistake

for another man, for which he was hung on a gallows thirty feet high, opposite the church of St. Nicholas, at the shambles."

"I will take care to point him out to thee," said the stranger. "If thou art hung, it shall not be for smiting the wrong man, I warrant thee."

"Where is he to be found, then?" asked the sanctuary man.

"He will attend the mass at Paul's to-morrow," replied the stranger, "and I will be there to show thee thy quarry."

"We will not fail," observed the ruffian.

"Look that you do not," said the stranger. "You will see me at the north door, and will follow me at a convenient distance, but you will not strike him—have a care of that—till you see me tighten my girdle."

"I understand, sir, and will be obedient to your behest," replied the sanctuary man.

"'Tis well," remarked the stranger, turning on his heel. "Remember you will see me at the north door."

With these words, he strode out of the alley.

The ruffian looked at his receding figure until it turned the corner, and then muttered to himself:—"Thou art a fool, with all thy cunning! Dost thou think, because thou comest here o' nights, I do not know thee. When I have done with thy foster-brother, I will have a turn with thee: thou shalt be to me a conduit of gold, and shalt run with nobles continually. By my head, boy, thou shalt pay well for this service. Jack covets thy gold chain, and would cut thy throat for it, which I must prevent if I can; yet I dare not tell him what I would make of thee."

Having uttered this soliloquy, the villain dived into the tavern and rejoined his companion.

In the mean time the visiter to the sanctuary had quitted its precincts. Muffling himself in his cloak and drawing his cap over his eyes, he dived into Panyer Alley and entered Paternoster Row, which he quitted by one of the courts leading into St. Paul's churchyard. It was striking nine, and the voices of the watchmen, calling the hour, were

heard in different parts of the city, mingling in concert with the loud tones of the clock. Descending Ludgate Hill, he arrived at Lud Gate, when he was challenged by the guard. The stranger stood erect, let fall his cloak, raised his cap, and disclosed the features of Richard Furnival, which were well known to the man on duty. He spoke not a word, but placing a groat in the soldier's hand, lifted the latch of the wicket, passed through, and went on his way.

“Who is that gallant?” inquired the corporal of the guard, whose grim visage appeared at the iron grating of the window beneath the gateway.

“It's young Dick Furnival, the merchant's son,” replied the sentinel, turning his back to the corporal, until he had put the groat out of sight: “he looks cross and fretful to-night; his leman hath not pleased him.”

“He is a wild losel,” remarked the corporal, gruffly, yawning and turning from the window; “he consorts with some choice spirits in this

good city. They say he's scattering his father's substance at a fine rate:—‘What Gaffer gathers with the rake, the heir scattereth with the fork.’”

CHAPTER III.

A DIGRESSION.—ANCIENT LONDON.—MASS AT
ST. PAUL'S.

THE ancient cathedral of St. Paul, though differing, in toto, from the present beautiful edifice, was a grand and magnificent pile, the pride and ornament of the city. It is not our business here to inquire, whether a Roman temple once stood on the spot,* or whether the

* Sir Christopher Wren's conjecture that a Roman temple once occupied this site, is supported by the fact, that on almost every occasion of excavation near our London churches, the horns and bones of animals are discovered in considerable numbers ; a circumstance which seems to indicate that, upon the introduction of Christianity, the pagan temples were overthrown, and Christian edifices raised on their site. Sir Christopher's conjecture has been flippantly dealt with by some of our *soi-disant* antiquaries, but it appears to have been well grounded.

merit of the Christian foundation, as Venerable Bede suggests, is due to Ethelbert, king of Kent. It is certain that this far-famed church was under the especial protection of the first William, who confirmed to St. Paul's all its privileges by a charter concluding with the words : " for I will that the church in all things be as free as I would my soul should be at the day of judgment."

In the year 1086, the old, or original, building was, with a great part of the city, destroyed by fire ; but, soon after, Bishop Maurice conceived the design of raising the stupendous structure which, after a lapse of six hundred years, was doomed to perish, like its predecessor, in that awful conflagration, commonly termed " The Great Fire." Stow, in his Survey, informs us that the second building was of such prodigious extent, " that men of that time judged it would never have been finished ; it was to them so wonderful for length and breadth."

The ancient church, the ground plan of which was in the form of a cross, consisted of a body with north and south aisles, and two square

towers at the north and south sides of the west front, the latter being the steeple of St. Gregory's church, which was attached to the cathedral.* The architecture of the east end is described as very beautiful, being heightened by the additions made to it in the fourteenth century. The windows in the basement afforded light to the crypt and sub-chapels; those of the superstructure resembled the south transept of Westminster Abbey; while above them was a large circular window of exquisite carving. Over this window was a gallery with quatrefoils. The aisles were of the same character. The cloisters were two stories in height, the upper one having pointed windows, the lower forming an arcade. The nave was three stories in height, the first consisting of an arcade formed by eleven semicircular arches, supported by clustered pillars. The gallery story was in the

* This tower was called the "Lollers' Tower," being used as the bishop's prison for heretics, and was, at a period later than that of which we are writing, the scene of a barbarous murder committed on a citizen named Hunne, by the chancellor of the diocese, assisted by the bell-ringer and others.

same character, but the upper story was in the early pointed style. This portion belonged to the period in which the tower was first erected. The screen to the choir was executed in the fourteenth century; in fact, the general appearance of the interior of the building was that of a cathedral of the thirteenth, with additions and ornaments of the fourteenth century. The whole of the superstructure rested, like the cathedral at Canterbury, on arched vaults, which comprised the church of St. Faith, besides several chapels. The total length of the building was nearly seven hundred feet from east to west, and the height of the tower with its spire was upwards of five hundred feet.

The interior of the building afforded the grandest vista imaginable, comprising an uninterrupted view of the roof from east to west. The worship of the cathedral was celebrated with all the pomp and magnificence of the catholic ritual, and it appears to have been crowded with citizens on all occasions.

To describe the numerous chapels, chantries, shrines, and other consecrated etceteras con-

tained within its walls, would occupy more time and space than our present limits afford. The curious may find an account of them in Dugdale, assisted by the spirited representations of the inimitable Hollar, to whose faithful hand the lover of our metropolitan antiquities is so greatly indebted.

In the area, within the angle formed by the south transept and the aisle, stood the elegant chapter-house, a structure of octangular form, the architecture of which resembled in style that of York cathedral; and on the north-east of the grand building stood that great "clochier," or bell tower, described by Stow as "a great and high clochier, or bel house, four square, builded of stone, and in the same a most strong frame of timber, with four bells. These," adds that venerable authority, "were the greatest that I have heard, and were called Jesus Bels, and belonged to Jesus Chapel. The same had a great spire of timber, covered with lead, with the image of St. Paul on the top."

Sir Miles Partridge, the same writer informs

us, staked a hundred pounds at dice, and won it of the tyrant Henry, when the bells were broken in pieces as they hung, and the building pulled down.

Such was the appearance which the cathedral of St. Paul presented before that event which old city inscriptions emphatically designate “y^e greate and dreadfull fire,” laying waste ancient London, and destroying nearly every famous building within its walls. So completely did that fierce element sweep away the remains which hungry time had left, that the antiquary has occasionally much difficulty in identifying particular localities. His veneration, therefore, for what fire and time have left, is proportionably increased, and as modern improvement sometimes lays bare the foundation of gate or barbican, or brings to light a half-obliterated sepulchral inscription, to the memory of some city worthy, his thoughts are carried back to those days of old when feudal grandeur and monkish magnificence, with the wealth and prosperity of the numerous guilds and fraternities, all contributed to render London a power-

ful and important, as well as an interesting and picturesque city.

It was a lovely autumn morning. The fog, which two hours before had hung heavily on the towers of St. Paul's, was rolling away, and every moment becoming thinner. The bright sun was mounting in the heavens, and the house-tops were in one blaze of light. Not a breath of air was stirring, and the grey smoke soared perpendicularly from the countless chimneys which rose around.

There is to the mind of an Englishman something peculiarly solemn and soothing in a fine Sabbath morning. The hum of voices is no longer heard, the busy thronging of the multitude and the hurried shuffling of feet are suspended; the very air seems stilled, and nature herself hushed into silence. .

Valentine had determined to hear mass at the cathedral, and Richard Furnival had become acquainted with his intention, as has been already shown. The bells in the "Lollers' Tower," and the shrill cries of the jackdaws in the great steeple of the cathedral were the

only sounds which disturbed the stillness of the morning. The citizens, with their wives and children, were on their way to the sacred pile, and until the bells ceased an uninterrupted human tide flowed into the cathedral. Then commenced that imposing service of a church which knew so well how to take the soul captive by first subduing the senses.

Valentine was among the earliest of those who arrived within the walls of the cathedral, and, as the service had not commenced, he had leisure to look around and admire the interior of the stupendous building. The upper windows were lit up with the bright rays of the morning sun, making the tapers burning before the shrines of the saints below look dim and sickly by the contrast. The eastern window appeared at a distance like some huge kaleidoscope, casting its many-coloured lights on the high altar, on which stood an enormous crucifix of silver, candlesticks of the same metal, with a chris-matory, an ampul, and the other vessels of silver-gilt, used in papal worship.

Valentine paused as he arrived at the tombs

of the Saxon kings, Sebba and Ethelred, and read the lengthy inscriptions placed above them in the north aisle of the choir. The next monument which attracted his attention was that of the renowned John of Gaunt, and Constantia and Blanche, his wives. The spear, shield, and cap of state of the great warrior were suspended above. He then passed on to the magnificent shrine of St. Erkenwald, behind the high altar. Five huge tapers, as long and nearly as thick as a man's arm, were burning before it, and two or three devout citizens were kneeling in prayer. The shrine was literally studded with precious gems, among many others there were "the best sapphire stones" of Richard de Preston, citizen and grocer, said to have the property of curing diseases of the eyes. So much was the monument venerated that, about a century before, the dean and chapter employed three goldsmiths for a whole year in beautifying and adorning it. Valentine looked on in silent wonder and admiration, scarcely daring to breathe, lest he should disturb the devotion of the pious burghers. Suddenly the

loud tones of the organ broke the silence which reigned around, the tramp of many feet was heard, the stalls were filling with the surpliced choristers, and crosses and crosiers were moving above the heads of the throng now occupying the church.

Quitting the spot, the young man hastened to join in the service of the morning. As he mingled with the throng which now filled the choir he endeavoured to repress the feeling of sorrow and sadness which weighed upon his spirits.

On his quitting home that morning, he had encountered Richard Furnival as he passed through the hall, who greeted him with a look that plainly indicated his malice and ill-will, but he spoke not a word. Valentine well knew his disposition, and as he walked to service he resolved in his mind to quit the home which had fostered him so many years, and bid adieu for a time to those much loved friends, whose peace and happiness he knew would be compromised by his remaining under the same roof with Richard Furnival: no marvel that the

heart of the poor youth was sad. He essayed to bring back his thoughts from that once happy and peaceful home,—from the kindness of that excellent man who had watched with a father's care over his earliest years,—from his Anna, of whom some pretty coifed head in the throng would remind him. These wandering thoughts, however, fled for a time, when a loud and sonorous voice gave out the words "*In nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus Sanctis,*" and the service of the mass proceeded. Valentine found his heart relieved as he joined with fervent devotion in the psalm, "*Judica me Deus,*" &c.; and at the words "*quare tristis es, anima mea, et quare, conturbas me?*" warm tears,—the first he had shed since his childhood,—flowed down his cheek and relieved his troubled heart.

While this was passing, a young man, richly and somewhat foppishly attired, was sauntering through St. Paul's Churchyard. He arrived at the northern door of the cathedral, where he took his stand. It was Richard Furnival. His usually fair and ruddy cheek was deadly

pale, his brow lowered, and his whole countenance indicated that some violent passion was working within him. He looked for some minutes anxiously and impatiently towards the north-east entrance to the churchyard, then took a few paces to and fro, and finally leant against the door-way and looked down at the long peaks of his boots. His dress was much handsomer than that of the sons of the principal city merchants. Long tight lavender-coloured hose, with short buskins reaching to just above the ankle, set off a very handsome pair of legs. His under vest was of crimson velvet, with a stand-up collar, after the most approved fashion of the day, the tight sleeves being shown by the loose and open ones of his gown, which was of the same colour as his hose, and slightly edged with expensive fur. His face was closely shaven, and his light hair, which curled naturally in short locks, was set off by a small bonnet of purple velvet, without feather or any ornament whatever. He wore a valuable gold chain, and the handle

of his dagger, which was thrust through an embroidered pouch, was richly studded with jewels.

As the time wore away, the young man's impatience increased ; he bit his thumb, stamped with his feet, and walked to and fro, half unsheathing and returning his dagger. Sometimes he would glance at the houses opposite, and then turning, read the strange inscription which some pious churchman had caused to be carved in Gothic characters over the door. Suddenly his face brightened, for he beheld two ruffianly-looking men, whom he instantly recognized, emerge from one of the courts which led into the churchyard. The young man made them a sign, and then disappeared under the doorway.

Richard Furnival entered the church on tip-toe, and his eye eagerly sought among the congregation for his foster-brother. He looked back over his shoulder, and perceived that his two grisly companions were not a dozen paces from him. Annoyed and alarmed at their impetuosity, he frowned, and the ruffians held

back. The voices of the choristers were in full chant, and the towering roof reverberated the grand and thrilling harmony produced by three or four hundred throats singing in unison. The scene was solemn and soul-subduing to all but the profligate and his fierce associates. Richard Furnival felt but one emotion, that of the deadliest hatred of his foster-brother; while the two ruffians were intent on one object, the execution of their diabolical commission.

The shortest of the two worthies, whose propensity to thieving was always predominant, soon fixed his eyes on the pouch of an old citizen, and made up his mind to try and get it in his possession. Richard Furnival had, in the mean time, nearly reached the spot where Valentine stood, but he was, as yet, unperceived by him, when suddenly, loud cries, which ill accorded with the sanctity of the place, disturbed and alarmed the congregation. The short thick-set man, intent upon getting possession of the citizen's purse, had cut with his dagger one of the strings by which it was suspended, but the tug at the remaining string

had betrayed the attempt, and the ancient gentleman, alarmed for the safety of his property, and totally forgetting where he was, cried out aloud, “Cutpurses! thieves!” The confusion which ensued may be imagined—the chanting ceased—the vergers rushed to the spot; but it was too late to arrest the offender, who darted out of the cathedral with the speed of an antelope, overturning two or three men who attempted to seize him. His companion, the tall man, finding that the game was up, made towards the door and attempted to leave the cathedral, but he was seized by half-a-dozen pair of hands, while as many voices denounced him as a companion of the fugitive thief. He struggled violently for a few moments, but finding resistance useless, he yielded himself to his captors, protesting loudly against the injustice of seizing an honest man while attending mass, and threatening his captors with an action for false arrest.

CHAPTER IV.

CIVIC JUSTICE—THE SANCTUARY MAN.

MASTER ZADOK BASING was the sitting alderman at Guildhall on the morning after the capture of the sanctuary man in the cathedral of St. Paul. It being Monday, the justice-room was, as it is now-a-days, crowded with offenders of nearly every description. There were night-walkers and drunkards not a few, mixed up with persons charged with more serious offences; beadles from the different wards applying for summonses or laying informations, and a fair sprinkling of witnesses for and against the prisoners; in fact, the ordinary human medley composing the levee of the justice-room.

Master Basing was the very personification

of a city alderman, having a Roman nose, a huge double chin, and a rosy face, the hue of which indicated that he did not always drink water; while his "fair round belly," confined by a wide girdle, did honour to the office which he held.

"Nicholas Faddle!" cried the alderman, looking down from his seat among the people below.

"Here, your worship!" answered a man in a beadle's livery, pushing through the crowd, and reaching the justice-table with difficulty.

"Faddle," continued his worship, assuming a look and tone of severity, "there's a heap of rubbish near the little conduit in the West Cheap, as high as my walking staff; who put it there?"

"O' my word I know not, your worship," replied the officer, submissively; "it's done o' nights, when——"

"Let me hear no more of it," cried the alderman, impatiently. "See that it be removed forthwith; and look that it be not repeated, or we shall have the Cheap ere long like a hog-walk."

The beadle bowed and retired, and then another man in a similar dress elbowed his way to the table, cap in hand, and bowing at every step.

“ I am the beadle of Cordwainers’ Street ward, worshipful sir,” said the man.

“ What then?” queried the alderman, bending on him a look of inquiry.

“ I apply for a summons against Master Crispe, the tallow-chandler of Soper’s Lane, for suffering his pigs to stray through the ward. One of them has maimed a child for life. He’ll take no warning, your worship, and the deputy sent me to you.”

“ You shall have it,” returned the alderman, nodding his head; then looking about him he inquired of the officer, “ Who is that red-nosed fellow yonder?—who charges him?”

“ We found him drunk and asleep in St. Nicholas’ shambles after complin, your worship,” replied the officer, pushing forward the man with the scarlet proboscis; “ and when we threatened him he told us, all the alder-

men in London might be d—d ; so we lodged him in the compter.”

There was an audible titter among the persons assembled in the justice-room as the man was led forward by the officers of the night-watch.

“ Holy Mary ! ” cried an old woman, “ that nose would light up a lantern in Bow steeple.”

“ Mass ! it would serve to fire a bombard ! ” said a wag, eyeing the laughter-moving feature.

“ Silence ! silence ! ” cried the officers.

“ I will commit any one who shall dare to pass his lewd jests here,” said the alderman, sternly ; then addressing the drunkard, “ How now, sirrah ! what hast thou to say for thyself ? ”

“ I’ faith, nothing, your worship,” answered the man. “ Blame not me, I pray you ; ’twas mine host o’ the St. Christopher’s double-beer that did it.”

“ That’s the excuse of all drunkards,” remarked the alderman. “ What calling dost thou follow ? ”

“ I am a broker’s man, sir, and have lived

twenty years in your aldermanry," was the reply.

"I shall fine thee a groat," said master Basing.

The man looked aghast at this sentence, and, ere he could recover from his consternation, one of the officers hallooed in his ear, "You are fined a groat!"

The drunkard withdrew with the officer to send to his friends for the amount of the fine, which it is quite needless to say he had not about him.

"Bring forward the man who was taken in Paul's yesterday," said his worship.

There was a shuffling of feet and a murmur in the justice-room when this order was given. Two of the officers instantly led forward the sanctuary man, handcuffed and ironed. This precaution was necessary, for the reasons mentioned in the preceding chapter. The fellow had received some violent blows in the struggle, one of which had laid open his forehead, and contributed to render his countenance more unseemly. He stood with a downcast and sullen

look, and only raised his eyes occasionally to scowl upon his accusers, some of whom were evidently intimidated by his appearance and manner.

“ Let those stand forward who saw this man in Paul’s yesterday,” said his worship, and more than a dozen persons pressed toward the bench. Then, addressing the prisoner, “ So, fellow, you must needs ply your trade on a Sunday, eh? and in Paul’s, too. We must rid the city of such lewd companions as you. What have you to say for yourself? Who are you? where do you live? and what is your calling?”

The ruffian, on hearing these interrogatories, raised his head, looked sullenly at the magistrate, and replied, “ I am a sanctuary man, but no thief.”

“ We shall see that anon,” remarked the alderman: “ let us hear the witnesses; where are they?”

“ Here,” replied a man in the garb of a tradesman.

“ What is your name and calling?” inquired the magistrate’s clerk, taking up his pen.

“ Thomas Doggrell, hosier, dwelling in the West Cheap, over ’gainst St. Michael at the Querne,” replied the witness.

“ I wouldn’t take the oath of that fellow; he has the very visage of a liar,” remarked the ruffian.

“ Hold your peace, sirrah,” said the alderman; “ we will hear you in your turn, but you must not interrupt the witness. Go on, master Doggrell.”

“ I was at the mass at Paul’s, yesterday,” continued the hosier, “ when, in the midst of *Te Deum*, I saw this man and his companion enter. Methought they followed a young gallant, who arrived scarce a minute before them, but as I looked at them again I was loath to believe he was attended by such grisly-looking serving-men, and I suspected they came for no good purpose. Well, your worship, I kept my eye on them, and anon I saw one (the short man who ran away) sidling up to Master Ralph Forster, the goldsmith, of the Old Change.”

“ This is how an honest man’s life is sworn away !” remarked the prisoner.

“Be silent, sirrah!” said the alderman, sternly.

“Well,” resumed the witness, “as I watched them, I saw the short man cut off Master Forster’s purse with his dagger, and then run out of the church.”

“Your worship will perceive that this dagger hath a very sharp edge, just such an one as is used by the cutpurses: we took it from this man after he was seized,” said an officer.

“Good evidence of the felony,” observed his worship. “Stand down, Master Doggrell. Who is the next witness?”

“I am, your worship,” said a strange-looking old man, advancing to the table; “I can tell you all.”

“What is your name?” asked the magistrate’s clerk.

“Heaven bless you, worshipful sir!” exclaimed the ancient citizen; “don’t you know *me*? I’m Ebenezer Tritton, citizen and girdler, dwelling at the sign of the Three Pigeons, in Bread Street; I have made girdles for the alderman and common council, and many of

our mayors, to boot, these thirty years, and never had fault laid to my charge. I served my time to worthy Master Jolliffe, of Staining Lane, who was accounted the best girdler within the walls, and" ——

"Tut! tut!" said the alderman, angrily, "we want to know of the robbery, not of your craft, Master Tritton. Go on."

"I will, your worship," resumed the citizen. "Well, you must know, then, that I went yesterday to Paul's to hear mass, and, standing at the entrance of the choir, I saw a handsome gallant enter by the north door. He was dressed like an earl's son, and wore a chain worth, methinks, a hundred nobles, and his girdle was a fair piece of work"——

Here the garrulous citizen was again interrupted by the magistrate, and desired to shorten his relation.

"I pray your worship to bear with me," he continued. "You shall hear all anon. This young gallant came into the choir, and there followed after him that man there, the prisoner."

“ Holy St. Martin, what a lie !” cried the ruffian, growing uneasy as the evidence thickened against him.

“ I call all the saints to witness that it is no lie,” said the girdler, waxing warm. “ I could swear to all three o’ them, but especially to that knave. I saw the short man make up to Master Forster and cut the purse from his girdle ; but before he did this he winked at his companion.”

Here the ruffian again broke out with a wrathful exclamation, and abused the witness vehemently, who returned it with interest, protesting that he was the most impudent thief he had ever beheld. In the midst of the uproar, the alderman commanded silence, and asked if the prisoner was known to the city officers.

“ He has long been known as a sanctuary man and a thief,” said one of the sergeants.

“ He stole a school-boy’s satchel in Pardon churchyard, last St. Mark’s day,” said another.

“ Here ’s evidence enough,” observed his worship : “ has the man any witnesses ?”

“ Here ’s one, your worship,” said an officer, “ who swears the prisoner was drinking with him all the morning.”

“ Let him stand forth, then,” said the alderman.

A gipsy-looking man, of small stature, with very dark eyes, and a sinister expression of countenance, stepped forward, and swore most positively that the accused was drinking with him at the time of the robbery; but this perjury was so gross and glaring, that the magistrate made up his mind to administer a fitting punishment to the offender.

This witness was ignorant of the fact, that the prisoner was taken within the cathedral, and not lost sight of for a moment.

“ He is an old bird of the sanctuary, your worship,” said one of the city sergeants. “ We ’ll set him in the stocks till curfew, an’ it please you.”

“ Do so,” said Master Basing; “ and let this fellow,” pointing to the prisoner, “ be whipped, from the Little Conduit to the Tun in Cornhill, to-morrow; after which he may

remain a month in Newgate, where he may have leisure to repent him of the lewd life he has led."

"He's as arrant a rogue as ever rode to the Elms," remarked the girdler to the hosier, as they hobbled together out of the justice-room. "I have known the knave these twenty years and more: he was once a servant or hanger-on to that old knight whom the foul fiend threw from the gallery of his house in Fleet Street. He was afterwards groom to the Prior of St. John's; but the prior's thumb-ring was one day missing, and he was sent away under suspicion; and so he has gone on from bad to worse, until he took to filching outright."

"Ay, ay, goodman Tritton, the way to the devil is down hill," said the hosier: "he'll remember his venture in Paul's, methinks."

The ruffian was, in fact, Roger Bragge, the once daring and unscrupulous follower of Sir Everhard Champnes. After the death of his master, he had, as related by the girdler, gone through a career of iniquity, until his crimes

and his necessities had obliged him to enter the unhallowed precincts of St. Martin's, where he had contrived to subsist after the fashion of most of its inmates. He was now led out of the justice-room, with his hands bound behind him, and escorted by a strong party of constables, a precaution rendered necessary by their having to pass the sanctuary on the way to Newgate.

CHAPTER V.

THE WHIPPING.

ON the morning after the examination and committal of Roger Bragge, many idlers had assembled in the West Cheap, and the citizens seemed to be on the look-out for some interesting spectacle. It was not a procession of priests and laymen, nor an arrival of knights and nobles, nor the entrance of the pope's legate, nor a grand jousting near Bow church, for the gallery close by that celebrated building was not hung with tapestry, nor guarded by men-at-arms: it was to witness none of such sights that the Cheap was gradually filling with people; no: they were congregating to behold the torments of a fellow-creature under the lash of the execu-

tioner. To witness this edifying, and by no means uncommon spectacle in those days, persons of almost every class were entering the grand public thoroughfare now called Cheapside. There were inferior tradesmen in abundance, and 'prentices far too many; serving men and (oh, shame to the sex!) women, watermen, porters, water-carriers, and persons of every low calling, mingled with a few well-dressed gallants, who came to enjoy the spectacle of a man flayed alive, while dragged at a cart's tail through the Cheap.

It was also very evident that this curiosity was not confined to the mere vulgar, for many comely faces were seen at the windows. The denizens of St. Martin's, like rats peeping from their holes, were on the look-out for the tumbril which was to convey the criminal from Newgate to the spot where his whipping was to commence, namely, the little conduit adjoining the church of St. Michael at the Querne.

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“Where’s the boy’s satchel, you rogue?” roared a saucy-looking ’prentice.

“Poor devil! it’s cruel hard to be whipped like a dog through the streets,” said a serving man, looking compassionately on the unfortunate wretch.

“You wouldn’t say so, though, if he had stolen your purse,” remarked the apprentice.

“Go to, sirrah!” retorted the man; “it may be your turn, some day.”

“He had a good rubbing down before the wardens of his company last week!” cried a man who stood near.

There was a loud “Ha! ha!” among the crowd at this unasked-for intelligence, and the apprentice skulked off.

The soldiers and city officers now commenced driving back the people who were pressing around, and by the time they had effected this, the criminal was tightly bound by both wrists to the cart, and the executioner, who had thrown off his jerkin and turned up his shirt sleeves, grasped in his right hand a short staff, from the end of

which depended about a dozen knotted cords ; then, on a signal from one of the sheriffs, the tumbril moved forward, the executioner raised his brawny arm, the lashes were tossed aloft like the snakes on the Gorgon's head, and the scourge descended on the shoulders of the culprit, who, on receiving the blow, uttered a cry so shrill and piercing that many of the spectators shuddered and turned from the spectacle with expressions of disgust and abhorrence.

Despite his previous quiet demeanour, the sanctuary man made tremendous efforts to disengage his hands, but the executioner and his assistant had performed that part of their duty well, and all his attempts were abortive, while the cords lacerated his wrists severely. Finding that resistance was unavailing, the prisoner set his teeth, bowed his head and yielded himself to the lash without uttering another cry, or giving any other token of suffering save the convulsive twitching of his limbs as the cart in its progress dragged him forward. Meantime the lash descended with violence upon the poor wretch's back, which

was now covered with crimson streaks: a murmur of horror rose from the more decent of the crowd; several citizens retired from the windows, and two or three of the more gentle sex, who might have borne the sight of a human head cleft in twain at a tournament, fainted at the bloody spectacle.

At a large latticed window, near Bow church, were seen two young men, handsomely attired, conversing with a girl of some eighteen years of age, with dark hair and eyes, and fine white teeth, which she took especial care to display, as she caressed a little dog which she held in her arms, and smiled at the many fine things addressed to her by the gallants. The maiden was Johanna Hyltoft, the daughter and heiress of one of the richest goldsmiths in London: the gallants were Richard Furnival and his boon companion Robert Poynings.

The dress of Poynings was rich, but in good taste, and in the strict fashion of the day; but, instead of his face being closely shaven, as was then the custom, he wore a forked beard, about four inches in length. Both that and his hair,

which curled naturally, were of a sandy red ; his forehead was low and retiring, his brow very prominent, and his eyes so closely set together that it might at first sight be supposed that he squinted. His features had a remarkable expression of malice and cunning, which was not concealed by his somewhat awkward attempts to render himself agreeable to his fair cousin.

“ Who gave you that pretty little dog, Mistress Johanna ? ” inquired Richard Furnival, gazing on the radiant beauty of the young girl, and playing as he spoke with his gold chain.

“ My father had it from the sub-prior of the Holy Trinity,” replied she.

“ It is a marvellous pretty beast,” continued the young man, “ and that fair little collar of silver becomes it well ; was it your own choosing ? ”

“ No, i’ faith, it was given me by young Master Farendon, one of the wardens of our guild,” answered the girl, patting the head of her favourite.

Richard Furnival looked rather blank on hearing this piece of information. Master Poynings observed his confusion, and endeavoured to make a diversion in his favour.

“My pretty cousin,” said he, “I don’t think the collar is silver.”

“There you do Master Farendon wrong,” cried the damsel, affecting to look angry. “Of a truth, it is good work of the craft, and was not fashioned in St. Martin’s. Look at it, cousin Poynings.”

She took the collar from the dog’s neck, and handed it to her kinsman.

“Nay,” said he, “I am no judge of such ware ; but I thought it might be one of those counterfeits which your father and his friends seized in the sanctuary last week : they say one fellow would have done battle with the goldsmiths, and that the dean put him into his dungeon cellar.”

The maiden pouted, and made no reply to this odd kind of explanation.

While this was passing, Richard Furnival, who wished the dog’s collar round the neck

of his rival, for such he supposed the goldsmith to be, put his head out of the window and looked up the Cheap.

“Mass !” exclaimed he, drawing back.
“what a crowd !”

“Holy St. Thomas !” cried Poynings, looking out ; “it is a crowd ! what poor devil are they trimming to-day ?”

“I have heard he is a sanctuary man,” remarked Johanna.

“Ay, and one of the fiercest in St. Martin’s,” said the young lady’s father, a fine looking old man, entering the room. “He was taken in Paul’s on Sunday, cutting a purse at mass time.”

Richard Furnival’s countenance alternately flushed and turned pale on hearing this, but his confusion was not observed. He had cared but little about the wretched man he had employed, since he saw him dragged away out of the cathedral, and he would rather have been reminded of that affair at any other time than the present.

Meanwhile the tumbril was proceeding down

Cheap, and the executioner's scourge was descending at intervals on the wretched culprit's back, drawing blood at every stroke, and scattering it in drops on the faces of the more coarse and brutal of the crowd who kept around. At length it stopped just before Master Hyloft's house, when the executioner, exhausted by his exertion, desisted, and drawing the lashes through his fingers to clear them of the blood with which they were saturated, handed the horrible instrument to his assistant. Bragge, at that moment raised his head and looked sullenly around him, his back streaming with gore and appearing like the carcass of some animal which had just been flayed. Then he turned his eyes upward, perhaps in the hope of seeing one sympathising face at the windows, for those immediately around had no such expression. At that instant he beheld the group at Master Hyloft's window, and recognised Richard Furnival.

The hideous expression of mingled rage, pain, and malice which the criminal's inflamed fea-

tures bore while eyeing the party at the window, was not unobserved by Master Hyltoft, who also noticed that Richard Furnival looked confused and agitated.

“This is no sight for maidens,” said the goldsmith, taking the arm of his daughter, whom he withdrew from the window; “Come in, child, come in; the miserable creature is looking this way.”

“By my head!” remarked Poynings, “the varlet would make a proper man-at-arms; he bears his whipping with a high stomach.”

“The knave is hardened to ’t,” said Richard Furnival, with a forced laugh.

The cart now moved forward, and the lash descended with redoubled violence; the ruffianly crowd pressed closer around, and were with difficulty kept back by the city officers. They had just entered the Poultry, when Braggè, whose strength and resolution were fast failing him, uttered a loud involuntary groan, and would have sunk on his knees but for his bonds. Another blow, and it was evident that he was past all physical suffering; he had fainted under

the horrible torture; his head sunk on his breast, and he remained suspended by his wrists, his legs dragging on the ground.

Then, and not till then, a better feeling appeared to influence the mob, who cried out to the executioner to release the prisoner. This was effected in a moment by cutting the cords which bound him, and the sufferer was lifted into the cart, which was ordered to be driven to the prison of the Tun in Cornhill.

While this was passing, Richard Furnival and his friend Poynings quitted the house of Master Hyltoft, and sauntering down the Cheap, turned into Soper's Lane, and proceeded to the water-side, where they took boat for Winchester Stairs, intending to pass the remainder of the day at the house of Poynings in Southwark, an ancient mansion called "the Gleen," situated in the parish of St. Olave, "over against" the town residence of the Abbot of Battle.

CHAPTER VI.

A DOMESTIC BRAWL.

——Hatred hatched at home is a tame tiger.

BEAUMONT *and* FLETCHER.

THE wayward conduct of Richard Furnival was a source of infinite disquiet to his father, who himself began to perceive that it was impossible that the two youths could any longer remain under the same roof. Like many kind and indulgent parents, he now saw that he had spoiled his son by excessive fondness. He found, when too late, that rebuke and remonstrance were alike unheeded, and that Richard followed the advice and counsel of his wild companions in preference to those of his father and the friends of his family. His intimacy with Poynings was especially displeasing to the merchant, who knew that that person had espoused

the cause of the Yorkist party, at this period increasing in numbers and influence, and was reported to be in constant correspondence with the principal leaders in that memorable faction, which a few years afterwards transformed "merrie England" into one huge slaughter-house. This knowledge was well calculated both to annoy and alarm the worthy merchant, whose family, as well as himself, were attached to the interests of the reigning monarch. But remonstrance with his son was of no avail; there are none so hard of hearing as the wilfully deaf.

Richard Furnival's visits to "the Gleen" were very frequent, and sometimes he would stay so late that his fond parent, knowing the danger of traversing the streets of London after dark, would become alarmed for his safety.

One night, long after curfew had rung, Master Furnival, with his daughter and adopted child Valentine, had delayed their supper long beyond the usual hour, in the expectation of Richard's return home to that meal, an important one at that period, when dinner was taken

at noontide. The hour wore away without his appearance, and the family had drawn around the table, when a violent tug at the bell of the outer gate announced his arrival.

He entered the room with a swaggering and impudent air, his cap stuck on one side of his head; his fair ruddy face, heightened by drinking, and without any mark of respect for his parent, which, scapegrace as he was, he had been accustomed hitherto to observe. The old merchant looked at him with a sorrowful and reproachful glance, but the reprobate heeded it not: flinging his cap on to a side-table, he threw himself into a chair which a domestic had placed for him, and commenced helping himself, without saying a word. He ate voraciously for a few minutes, and then, pushing his trencher from him, called for drink. Valentine, who sat near him, lifted the huge flagon which stood at his elbow, and placed it within reach of his foster-brother.

Richard Furnival, in return for this courtesy, scowled at Valentine, and said, in a bitter tone,

“ I drink not with thee, beggar ! ”

“Son,” said Master Furnival, sternly, “I will not hear such language at my table.”

“You will not hear it long, father,” replied the young man, “if *he* remains to poison the minds of those who once loved me.”

“Richard, Richard,” said the merchant, reproachfully; “thy wild companions have driven thee distraught; what fiend possesses thee?”

“The fiend is not in me!” cried the prodigal; “his dwelling is in this house, in which he abides as though it were his own; the fiend, father o’ mine, is *there*; he sits *there* to mock me and cheat me of thy love!”

He pointed as he spake to Valentine, who saw with concern that he was warming, and required little to cause him to break out into violence.

“Peace, froward boy!” said the merchant, in an authoritative tone; “I will have no brawling here. By this light, I do perceive that I have spoiled thee with too much care, and that thou art now requiting me for my fondness.”

“ You love me no longer,” remarked Richard, sullenly.

“ Thou art a false losel,” replied his parent.

“ These twenty years have I watched over thee with more than a father’s care. Thou hast had indulgences beyond thine estate ; thy apparel hath been the best and the most costly of any citizen within the walls, and thou hast never gone abroad with an empty pouch ;—what have I *not* done for thee, thou graceless boy ? ”

“ I will tell thee, father,” said the young man, pushing himself back in his chair.

“ What ? ” inquired the merchant sternly.

“ You have not cast off that beggar,” continued young Furnival, pointing with a gesture of bitter scorn to Valentine, who, notwithstanding his determination to put up with any provocation that might be offered him, now felt his blood kindling at this insulting language.

“ Richard,” said he, endeavouring to repress his resentment, “ what have I done to offend thee ? ”

“What hast thou done?—what hast thou done, beggar?” shouted Richard Furnival; “everything—all thou canst do to injure me, —to rob me of my father’s—of my sister’s love. —of the love of all ——”

Here Anna Furnival, who had remained a silent and grieving witness of her brother’s intemperance, interposed.

“Richard,” said she, her mild blue eyes swimming with tears, “brother Richard, you wrong him grievously; he has never harmed you in word or deed.”

“Now, by my soul, wench!” exclaimed the prodigal, “thou art possessed.”

“Not I, indeed, Richard, replied the maiden; “it is thyself who art possessed. Thou wilt bring down disgrace on us all, at this rate.”

Richard, reddening with passion, started up from the table.

“Thou false jade,” cried he, “why not say at once thou lovest this fellow who has lived on thy father’s bounty?”

Here the merchant interposed.

“Go to, boy!” said he, “go to, sirrah! I will not hear more of this: either bridle thy tongue, or go to thy chamber.”

“I will do neither,” retorted the young man.

“Richard Furnival,” said Valentine in a sorrowful but firm tone, “these airs but ill become you, and are needless. I shall shortly leave you, and be no longer a burthen on my friend—my more than father ——”

His enemy smiled bitterly,—Valentine continued,

“Vex not yourself about me: when I return, I may be more worthy of your sister’s love ——”

He was interrupted by Richard, who, swearing a bitter oath, exclaimed,

“A murrain seize thee, varlet! Sooner than see that come to pass, I would cut thy throat.”

Valentine’s feeling of resentment here overcame his prudence, and, provoked by Richard’s language, he replied haughtily,

“Richard, thou knowest that thou could’st

not taunt another with the same language. I am in thy father's house, and am——”

He was again interrupted by Richard, who cried in a furious rage,

“Dost thou threaten me, thou beggar's brat? —then take that for my defiance!”

He seized as he spoke the massive silver flagon, and hurled it with all his might at the head of Valentine. The missile, thrown by an unsteady hand, flew wide of its object, and struck the wall. Instantly all was confusion. The merchant, his daughter, and Valentine started up, and the latter, perceiving Richard lay his hand on his dagger, sprung forward to prevent his drawing it.

A desperate struggle ensued between the young men, the old merchant endeavouring in vain to separate them. Though younger than his antagonist, Valentine was both taller and stronger of limb, and exerting his utmost strength, he succeeded in wresting from him the dagger which Richard had drawn, and threw it to the other end of the room; then

pinioning his arms, he forced him into a chair, where he held him securely, in spite of his loud and violent threats of vengeance. Finding, however, that his strength was unequal to the struggle, Richard soon desisted, and Valentine relinquished his hold. In the mean time the servant had picked up the dagger and handed it to his master.

There was a pause of some moments, during which nothing was heard but the loud breathing of the two youths. Master Furnival, surprised and alarmed at the scene he had just witnessed, knew not how to act; while Anna, pale as marble and trembling with affright, leant on her father's shoulder, and looked alternately at her brother and her lover, when Valentine caught up a light, and casting a reproachful look upon his violent foster-brother, thus addressed the merchant:—

“Dear Master Furnival, this sad encounter hath done what my heart rebelled at, since it will now force me from your house, which I have too long considered as my home. To-

morrow will see me far from the only friends I have ever known."

He would have said more, but emotion choked his utterance, and turning away his face to conceal the tears which stood in his eyes, he hurried out of the room, and proceeded to his chamber. As he passed out, Richard Furnival muttered a curse upon him between his closed teeth.

For some years previously, Master Furnival had been in the practice of presenting to each of his children, as well as to his adopted son, on their birth-day, a quarter noble. Valentine found that he had ten of these pieces, and small as the sum may appear to the reader, it was at that period no inconsiderable amount. Placing the gold carefully in a leathern pouch, and making a bundle of his other necessities, he prepared everything that evening for his departure. At an early hour the next morning, before the household were stirring, he quitted that dear home which contained all he loved in the world, and when the first

rays of the sun were gilding the weathercocks and spires of London, he was on board a vessel bound for Calais, and proceeding with a fair wind down the river.

THE FOSTER-SON.

A LEGEND OF

THE WARD OF FARRINGDON EXTRA.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE FOSTER-SON.

CHAPTER I.

ANNA FURNIVAL HEARS OF HER LOVER.



HE efforts of the actively bad seldom relax. In driving Valentine from the dwelling which had sheltered him from his earliest infancy, Richard Furnival had attained one object. He had another, which, to his mind, was even of more consequence, namely, the union of his sister with Poynings. This, however, he discovered to be a task of great delicacy as well as of difficulty. Anna Furnival possessed the high spirit and determination of

her brother, without his vices; and, as her father loved her tenderly, he could never be persuaded to urge her to marry a man against whom she entertained aversion. In vain, Richard brought Poynings to the house; he appeared to the maiden each time more forbidding of aspect, and more unamiable in manner and deportment. In fact, the Southwark esquire, for such was really his title, had been but little accustomed to female society, and had consequently learned few of those arts which, with some women, compensate for a lack of personal comeliness.

Richard Furnival was equally unfortunate in prosecuting his own suit: Mistress Johanna Hyltoft in her heart preferred young Farendon, the goldsmith, though neither so smart nor so handsome as the merchant's son, and her father also preferred him; but then Richard's suit was backed by Poynings, to whom Master Hyltoft was related by marriage; nevertheless, the goldsmith had determined to seize on the first opportunity to forbid the young man's visits.

Meanwhile, Richard did not cease to importune his sister; but his entreaties and threats were alike vain and fruitless; the maiden had a will of her own, and absence seemed to increase her affection for her lover. In one of their frequent quarrels on this subject, Anna imprudently admitted that she had heard from Valentine, who had informed her that he had volunteered as a man-at-arms in the English army, and had been noticed by his officers in some of the then frequent encounters in Normandy between the rival nations. This was joy and delight to Anna Furnival, but poison and daggers to her brother.

But an event now occurred, which suspended, for a short time, even the schemes of Richard Furnival. The old merchant having one day been overtaken by a violent storm of rain, while on the Thames in an open boat, caught a severe cold, which in a few days terminated fatally. Deep, indeed, was the sorrow of that good man's friends, and loud and sincere were the lamentations of the poor, as they

crowded round his coffin, when his mortal remains passed to their last resting place in the chancel of St. Bride's church.

This event opened a new world to Richard Furnival, who was now entirely his own master; but it was a heavy affliction to Anna, who dreaded everything from her brother's rashness and prodigal living. People now began to be inquisitive about the merchant's *will*, which, however, was not to be found. That he had made one, everybody believed; but, unfortunately, the priest of St. Bride's and Elias Crane, the notary, had both been called to their account about five years previously. There was, to be sure, an entry in the books of the latter to the effect that he had received a certain sum for drawing up the merchant's will; but then it was possible it had never been executed. Be this as it may, no such document was now to be discovered in the well-filled coffers of the deceased merchant. Richard was lord of all, and having assured himself of this, he next

proceeded to use it as a means of intimidating and subjecting his sister to his rule. He was even so unmanly as to threaten her with expulsion from his house, unless she consented to espouse Poynings; but the maiden remained firm to her purpose, and resolutely told him she would rather enter a convent than become the bride of one whom she abhorred.

Anna was daily subjected to the bitter mortification of hearing her absent lover abused in coarse and unmeasured terms, and of witnessing the extravagances of her spendthrift brother, at whose table were constantly to be found some of the most profligate and worthless characters in London:—the wealth of the old merchant was fast fleeing away.

To increase the disquiet and sorrow of Anna, she had not, for some time past, received intelligence of her lover. Doubt and fear by turns racked her mind; Valentine's letters might have been intercepted by her inexorable brother, or, what was worse,—and the thought alone made her heart sink within her,—Valen-

tine might have fallen in a strange land, and found the unblest grave of a soldier, for the accounts which had been received of late from France told of the repeated losses of the English.

One day, as Anna returned from mass at St. Bride's church, she encountered at the door a crowd of beggars importuning for alms.

"Heaven bless you, fair lady," cried a woman surrounded by four or five half-clad children; "I am a poor widow; my husband was a waterman, and was drowned in his boat off Cold Harbour, last St. Jude's day."

Anna responded to this appeal by dropping two small coins into the widow's lap, and then the rest of the beggars set up a simultaneous howl to excite compassion. There was no Mendicity Society in those days, and this class of folk were then always troublesome and occasionally dangerous.

"Charity, for the love of the Virgin!" cried an old blind man with a dog, a well-known beggar in the principal thoroughfares of the city.

“Charity!” cried a wretched-looking urchin, extending a withered arm; “I can’t work, dear lady.”

“Charity, lady, charity, for the love of Christ and the saints!” roared a fellow, born without feet, who was dragging himself along on a little truck with wheels, regardless of the toes of the other wretches who thronged around.

“Charity, sweet mistress!” cried a man, elbowing his way through the crowd: “I lost my good right-hand, and received a grievous wound i’ the head at the taking of the castle of Rougechaperon, in Normandy.”

This fellow was the ruffian Roger Bragge. He had disguised himself so completely that his graceless employer would scarcely have recognised him. Having made his appeal in the manner described, he watched the countenance of the maiden narrowly, and perceived that his words were both heard and noted.

By this time, Anna, scattering a few small coin among the beggars, had cleared the crowd, but she kept her eye on Bragge, and when she

had walked a little distance, she beckoned him to follow her. The ruffian, affecting lameness, and wearing his right arm in a sling, the hand being carefully hidden by bandages, limped after her.

“ Good friend,” said she, “ you spoke of France, and of your service there.”

“ Ay, lady,” replied the ruffian, “ would I had never seen that accursed land, where so many brave Englishmen have fallen.”

Anna sighed deeply, and inquired how long he had left the English army.

“ Last week, only, sweet lady,” replied Bragge. “ I lay ill at Calais a whole month, of a fever brought on by my wounds. When I recovered, I was sent home to beg. I am useless now as a splintered lance, or a snapped bow-string.”

“ Poor man ! ” ejaculated the maiden, placing a half-groat in his hand, but fearing to ask the question which rose to her lips.

“ A thousand blessings on your fair head, sweet mistress,” said the fellow, affecting to be overwhelmed by her generosity, and acting his

part to perfection. He was about to turn away, when Anna spoke again.

“ Friend,” said she, hesitating as she spoke, “ saw ye ever aught of a young Englishman,—a man-at-arms—named Valentine ? ”

This was just the question for which Bragge had been waiting.

“ Let me see—,” said he, affecting doubt and indifference, “ —a young man—Valentine—Valentine did you say, fair lady ? ”

“ Ay, that is the name of him I would fain know something of.”

“ Was he pale of visage, with a dark eye, and hawk-nose ? ” inquired the villain.

Anna felt her heart beat wildly at the question. “ Yes, yes ! ” she replied, hurriedly ; “ tell me if you know aught of him.”

“ I remember him well ; he was of Sir Richard Hollier’s company,” replied the ruffian ; “ he was shot through the brain with a quarel at the storming of—of—I forget the name of the chateau, lady.”

“ Thank you, friend, thank you,” said the poor girl, struggling violently with her feelings,

and turning from her informant, she hastened homeward with a bursting heart. There is some suffering which neither pen nor tongue can describe, and such was that experienced by Anna Furnival upon hearing this, as she supposed, authentic account of her lover's death. The loss of her beloved parent, and the mad career of her brother, had tended to sadden and depress her spirits, but the dreadful news of this day had crushed her to the earth,—the cup of affliction was filled to overflowing,—both love and hope were annihilated together.

CHAPTER II.

MISTRESS JOHANNA HYLTOFT DECIDES ON THE CHOICE
OF A HUSBAND.

“ JOHANNA, my darling,” said Master Hyltoft, patting affectionately the head of his beloved daughter, “ Johanna, I shall go and hear complin, and when I return thou shalt read to me that merry tale of Master Geoffrey Chaucer, out of the book William Farendon gave me. Do thou keep to thy chamber, child; and if Poynings or young Furnival should call, I will have them told that thou art not to be seen.”

“ Why so, dear father ? ” asked Johanna.

“ To tell thee plainly, wench,” replied the merchant, “ I fear them both; I mistrust Robert Poynings, though he be my kinsman. I

fear he is a partisan of the duke of York, and that he is hatching treason."

"Treason!" repeated the young girl.

"Ay, wench, treason. He hath dropped, at times, as if intended for my ear alone, words of strange import, and there are wild rumours abroad. Our king, whom God preserve, hath not the high stomach of his father, and there are daring men who would deprive him of his crown, at least so the bruit runs."

"I never liked our kinsman Poynings," remarked the girl, with a grimace expressive of repugnance; "and then he wears that ugly red beard."

The goldsmith smiled. "He hath made a vow which forbids him to shave it; and that vow is, I doubt not, that he will favour the duke's cause, at all hazard," said he.

Master Hyltoft departed, and left his daughter to her embroidery. He soon returned, and the conversation on the subject of Poynings and young Furnival was renewed at supper-time.

"I am glad the young man has not been

here," observed the merchant; "and I care not if he never come again, Johanna."

"Have you heard something anew of him, then?" asked the maiden.

"I have," replied her father. "Our neighbour, Pearce, tells me that he hath gone on more wildly than ever since his father's death, and that he must soon come to a stand still."

"What of his sister?" inquired Johanna.

"They say she weeps incessantly for the death of her lover, and will not take comfort," replied the goldsmith.

"Poor girl!" said Johanna, "I must see her."

"She hath resolved to take the veil," continued the merchant. "The prioress of St. Helen's is her friend, and all is arranged for her entering on her noviciate."

"Alas, for love!" thought Johanna to herself; "see what comes of loving a soldier. If I marry Dick Furnival, I shall lose him some day. My father is right; William Farendon shall be my husband."

The truth was that Johanna, though pos-

sessed of rare beauty, was a very matter-of-fact sort of personage ; and, for such a mere girl, cautious and calculating beyond her years. Such an union of mind and person is not of unfrequent occurrence, and it is, perhaps, well for this every-day world that it is so.

While the merchant and his daughter were thus engaged, a loud knocking was heard at the gate.

“ Ha ! ” cried he, “ here they are. Ho ! Daniel ! tell Master Poynings, if it be he, that I have company, and would fain see him some other time.”

The servant repaired to the gate, and immediately after heavy footsteps were heard ascending the stairs. Master Hyltoft, believing that his orders were disobeyed, rose, and was about to anathematise his blundering servitor, when he was startled by the apparition of a man attired as a pursuivant, accompanied by two sergeants-at-arms, who strode into the room and looked around them.

The goldsmith's blood froze in his veins : a charge of high treason in those days bade a

man be prepared for the axe or the stake, and the citizen could scarcely summon resolution enough to ask the object of their visit.

“ We seek,” said the pursuivant, reading from a narrow slip of parchment, “ *Robert Poynings, of Southwark, esquire, and Richard, the son of John Furnival, the merchant*, who are charged with conspiring against the peace of our sovereign lord, King Henry the Sixth.”

Master Hyltoft felt his mind a little relieved by this declaration ; albeit, the intimation was sufficiently alarming ; and he faltered “ They are not here.”

“ But they frequent your house, Master Hyltoft,” remarked the officer.

“ They do,” replied the goldsmith ; “ but I swear by all the saints, they have not been here to-day.”

“ We must search, nevertheless,” said the pursuivant, turning to the sergeants-at-arms. “ Master Hyltoft, we are doing but our duty, and you will forgive this.”

“ You are welcome to search where you will,” said the goldsmith. “ What, ho !—

Dan ! show those gentlemen into every chamber and secret place in the house."

The pursuivant and his attendants left the room, and commenced their search. They returned, however, in a few minutes to Master Hyltoft, who now inquired more particularly the nature of the charge against his kinsman and young Furnival.

He learned that Poynings had long been suspected to be an agent of the Duke of York, and that he had been detected in an attempt to raise a rebellion in Kent in favour of that ambitious nobleman. The pursuivant further informed him, that they had that evening searched the Gleen, the residence of Poynings, in Southwark, and that armed men had taken possession of the house, in anticipation of his returning. Poynings was, however, too deep a schemer to be caught napping, and a friend of his, a hanger-on about the court of Henry the Sixth, then at Greenwich, had given him timely notice of his danger. Both he and young Furnival, upon receipt of this intelligence, considered it most prudent to decamp

with all possible celerity, and the wind being fair for a passage down the river, the boon companions soon found the master of a fishing-smack, who, for a consideration, agreed to take them as far as Rochester, where Poynings had friends in his confidence.

Upon the departure of the officers, the goldsmith took occasion to represent to his daughter the absolute folly of thinking any more of Richard Furnival; and, as he kissed her, and bade her good night, he muttered to himself, “By our Lady, the wench will profit by this adventure. Only think of my would be son-in-law’s head grinning on London Bridge!”

CHAPTER III.

THE PRIORESS—THE DISCLOSURE—"THE COMMONS
OF KENT."

THE flight of Richard Furnival, and his sister's determination to embrace the life of a recluse, were two topics on which the gossips of London had, of course, much to say, and respecting which there were many sapient speculations among all classes. Those who had predicted the young man's ruin of course piqued themselves upon the fulfilment of their prophecies. A few pitied him, but the greater part felt little sympathy for one who had flouted all his father's friends, and preferred the company of the worthless and dissolute to the worthy and well-ordered; but we must leave the prodigal for a while, and lead the

reader to the priory of St. Helen's within Bishopsgate.

In the year 1450, Dame Isabel, the daughter of Sir Everhard Champnes, and the widow of Reginald Chichelye, who in 1431 had sought and found an asylum in the priory of St. Helen's, was now its superior. Twenty years passed in the solitude and discipline of the cloister had dimmed the lustre of her rare beauty; the healthy glow of her cheek had been supplanted by that pallid hue which study and mortification tend to produce, and time had "laced with envious streaks" her once glossy hair; but her noble figure, which even the monastic habit could not conceal, was as yet unimpaired. Pitied for her sorrows, revered for her varied acquirements, and beloved for her virtue and piety, Isabel Chichelye was the idol of the good sisters of St. Helen's, and their superior having deceased about five years previously, the nuns unanimously elected her prioress.

Among the gentle Benedictines of St. Helen's, Anna Furnival found some sympathising

hearts, but she was especially noticed by the lady prioress. A friendship, created by kindred sorrows, sprung up between them, and in the intervals of the daily and nightly service, they were always in each other's company.

As the two friends sat one day in the prioress's little parlour, the arrival of an aged priest was announced. He entered the room, and the lady Isabel at a glance perceived that it was Father Thomas, the mass-priest of St. Dunstan's, once her unhappy father's confessor. She rose to receive him with marked attention and respect. Time had wrought a great change in his appearance; instead of presenting the tall gaunt figure which twenty years ago was wont to stalk through Fleet Street, and which, at the earlier period of our tale, arrived so opportunely at the inquest on the body of the murdered Reginald, he was now bent double with age, and his feeble voice marked the mortal wear and tear of seventy winters.

The priest had news at once important, strange, and painful to communicate to the

lady prioress: he had but two hours previously shrived a dying man as old as himself, and that man was Matthew, her father's steward!

Isabel learned that Matthew, in his dying moments, had communicated to the priest the part he had played twenty years previously, when, at the request of his fierce master, he had conveyed away her child. After the death of Sir Everhard he feared to disclose the secret, and had cajoled old Agatha into silence, by assuring her that the child was illegitimate, and was duly provided for by the old knight. Dreading the censure of the world for his participation in his master's guilt, he had, until his dying hour, kept the secret to himself; but the pangs of death and remorse had wrung from him the confession which had been received by Father Thomas, whose perplexity was so much the more increased when, on inquiry, he heard of the decease of the worthy merchant Furnival, the flight of his graceless son, and the death, as it was currently reported, of that good man's adopted child.

The priest almost doubted the prudence and

the humanity of communicating what he knew to the lady prioress, but on due reflection he had determined to do so. The effect may be readily conceived; it was like tearing the bandage from a half-healed wound. The unhappy lady received the shock with the fortitude of one who had bidden adieu to the world and its pleasures; but it was yet too severe, and an illness of several weeks alarmed the sisterhood, who for some days despaired of her life. Poor Isabel! the measure of her affliction was not yet filled; other and sadder trials were yet awaiting her!

This year was remarkable for several commotions among the people, or, as they are termed by the chroniclers, "the commons." A spark was kindling and was soon about to burst into a flame: the factions of the White and Red Rose were beginning to uplift their heads. The weak-minded King Henry, unfitted to govern the fierce spirits of his time, already trembled on his throne, and audacious traitors and demagogues raised their crests in every quarter of the kingdom. It was, say

the chroniclers, "the year of the plenary pardon at Rome," but in England it was distinguished as one of political turmoil and insurrection. The impeachment by the House of Commons of the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Say, the Bishop of Salisbury and others, who were charged with giving up Anjou and Maine, and other treasons, was answered by the award of a slight punishment to the accused; an act of ill-timed and ill-judged mercy which was readily turned against Henry and his government, by the friends of the Duke of York. Suffolk, against whom the popular rage was at its height, for the English were daily losing ground in France, was sentenced to five years' exile, and in obedience to that decree, embarked from the coast of Norfolk, but falling into the hands of his enemies, was beheaded on the gunwale of an open boat, and his body thrown on the sands at Dover.

Such was the posture of affairs and the state of feeling in England, when Cade, a creature of the Duke of York, under the assumed name of Mortimer, raised the standard of rebellion in

Kent. This daring ruffian, whom the old chronicler describes as “sober in eommunicacion, wyse in disputyng, arrogant in hart, and styfe in his opinion,” advanced as far as Blackheath, the king then being at Greenwich, and drew up a petition, which he forwarded to the monarch, praying him to dismiss from his councils certain persons therein named.

The petition was disregarded, and a sufficient force having been mustered, Henry was advised to give battle to the insurgents; but on the advance of the royal troops, Cade and his followers retreated upon Seven Oaks, where he succeeded in drawing into an ambush Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother William, who had been sent against them. Both these gentlemen, with many of their friends, fell in the conflict, and the rebels, emboldened by their success, advanced again to Blackheath.

On hearing of the death of the Staffords, the king's army mutinied, and resolutely declared, that if the Lord Say were not committed to prison, they would espouse the cause of Cade. Alarmed at this manifestation, the pusillanimous

monarch and his court removed from Greenwich to London, and upon the advice of his council, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Duke of Buckingham proceeded to Blackheath, where they had a long conference with the arch-rebel, who is reported to have been "right discrete in his answerys;" but, elated by his success, he resolutely refused to disband his army, or submit himself to the king's mercy.

Henry and his court, terrified by the gathering storm, and mistrusting those around them, withdrew to Kenilworth Castle, leaving the city unprotected. In the mean time Cade arrived in Southwark, and the same day the commons of Essex advanced to Mile-end, where they encamped. Terror and consternation seized upon the Londoners. The foreigners, of whom there were great numbers within the walls, began to secrete their most valuable effects; while the rabble and the sanctuary folk matured their plans for a general outbreak, as was their invariable custom upon occasion of any popular commotion.

Fortunately for the citizens, Lord Scales

was left in the Tower with a tolerable garrison, and upon these the more bold and stout-hearted of the Londoners relied. They were not disappointed in their expectations, as the sequel will show. Cade was fully aware of this, and though he calculated upon the co-operation of the Essex rebels, he was yet not sufficiently informed of the disposition of the Londoners; he therefore judged it prudent to remain for a short period in Southwark until he had despatched his emissaries into different parts of the city.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WHITE HART IN SOUTHWARK.—SUMMARY

JUSTICE.

THE aspect of no locality in London or its environs has been more completely changed than that of the Borough of Southwark. Even in our time, since the demolition of the ancient bridge, the High Street has undergone a total metamorphosis, and now presents nothing but two very ordinary rows of dull-looking houses, inhabited by tradesmen. There is not a gable-front nor a weathercock in the whole street; the inns have sunk into uninteresting and unpicturesque public-houses, with stable-yards and warehouses for the bestowing of goods and merchandise; their glory has departed, and there is even nothing left of the “Tabberd,” immortalised by Geoffrey Chaucer, which will

detain the antiquary for half an hour. It was not so at the period of our tale. The High Street of Southwark then resembled that of a country town. Houses large and small were huddled together in picturesque confusion, the fronts overhanging the footway, and the signs reaching across the whole width of the road. One of these, more conspicuous than the rest, bore the figure of a *White Hart*, painted with true heraldic propriety, with a collar and chain of gold about its neck. The sign-board swung on hinges from a huge beam of timber which projected from the front of the house, one of the largest in the High Street, which, on the first day of July 1450, was filled with a motley assemblage of men variously accoutred and armed

The meridian sun darted its fierce rays down upon the High Street, which resembled a place in the occupation of a hostile army. Scarcely a person was to be seen in a civil habit; all were clad in a costume with which the Londoners were not familiar, and weapons of almost every description flashed in the sun-beams;

lances and morrice pikes, bills and partisans, swords and axes, scythes fixed on long poles, and flails studded with spikes, were seen in the hands of the desperadoes,—the followers and supporters of the rebel Cade, who was then within the White Hart, holding a council with his captains previously to dinner, which he had ordered to be provided for himself and about a score of his principal friends. But we must introduce the reader to the goodly company who had made the ancient inn their quarters.

Within the largest room were seated, at an ample oaken table, the arch-rebel and his council; a strange-looking group, to which the pencil of Salvator Rosa alone might have done justice. They looked more like a band of brigands than legitimate soldiers, and such indeed they were. In person and aspect Cade was not formidable; he was rather below the middle size, but well knit and muscular, and there was more of cunning and intrigue in his small grey eye than martial daring. He wore a rich brigandine, studded with gilt nails, of which, as well as of his gilt spurs, he appeared to be not a little

vain. A visored sallet of excellent workmanship, with oreillets, or ear-pieces, was on his head, and he was armed with a large cutting falchion and a dagger. Near him stood Master Robert Poynings, and at his right hand, wearing a suit of complete armour, fluted and engraved, was Richard Furnival. Other personages, variously armed, were sitting around the table, and one of them was conspicuous by his gigantic stature. This fellow wore a heavy hauberk over a leathern jack, or haqueton, and held in his hand one of those enormous axes of the period, which, in such powerful hands, might almost have cleft a horseman and his steed asunder. Poynings, upon whose face might be seen a lurking smile of dubious import, stood behind Cade, leaning on a large espadon, or two-handed sword; he was, in fact, the sword-bearer and carver of the rebel leader.

“Robin of Beaksbourne,” said Cade, addressing the man in the hauberk, “thou shalt be charged with this message to the Lord Scales. Bid him send Say to the Guildhall at noon-tide to-morrow, and we will see that justice be done upon him.”

“ I marvel if he will yield him up,” remarked Robin.”

“ Mass !” cried Cade, dashing his clenched fist on the table,—“ Let him but say so, and we will assault the Tower at once !”

“ By your leave, not so, sir captain,” said Richard Furnival ; “ it would take several days to win the Tower, and you would gain nothing by it : the city is at your bidding, and you have only to enter it to be welcomed by your friends.”

“ By my holidame, thou art right !” cried Cade ; “ we will proceed to the city, and then send for the traitor Say ; he shall receive his reward ere we dine to-morrow. But where is Thomas Cock ?—he tarries—Corpus Christi ! These foreigners surely will not refuse us !”

As he spoke, the rumbling of a cart and the clatter of horses’ feet were heard in the street, and immediately after, three men, in the dress of citizens, entered the room and approached the rebel in a submissive and deferential manner.

“ Well, Cock,” said Cade, addressing the fore-

most citizen, "what tidings dost thou bring of these foreign popinjays? are they obedient? what have they sent?"

Cock bowed, and taking from his pouch a paper, referred to it, and replied:—

"The Merchant-Strangers, my lord, have ordained and sent for your use the chief things ordered of them,—to wit," (here he read from his paper,) "twelve harness complete, of the best fashion; twenty and four brigandines; twelve battle-axes; twelve glaives; and six horses furnished for the field."

"Is that all?" cried the leader; "no money?—what of the thousand marks demanded of them?"

"They beg your lordship's patience till even-song, when the money shall be surely sent," said Cock.

"If they fail," observed Cade, "every man o' them may make his shrift; for, by my father's soul, I will have the head of every Genoese, Florentine, and Venetian within the walls, if the money be not sent."

Dinner was now announced, and mine host

of the White Hart, who from the bottom of his soul wished his guests at the devil, entered the room, bearing the first dish; but scarcely was it placed on the table when a hideous uproar was heard in the house, which was crammed with Cade's followers.

During the morning the rebel forces had been augmented by the arrival of many lawless and desperate men, who had found the means of escaping from the city. Among these were two with whom the reader is already acquainted, namely, the ruffian Bragge, and his companion in iniquity, Jack Hollis, whose propensity to thieving was this time fatal to them both. Having mingled with the followers of Cade, Hollis espied, in one of the upper rooms of the inn, a silver chalice, which he contrived to flatten and conceal in his bosom; but, unfortunately for himself, the robbery was perceived by one of the drawers, who immediately seized the thief, and called loudly for assistance. A desperate struggle ensued between the thief and his captor, and both, holding each other by the throat, missed

their footing and rolled down the stairs. Several men now seized the culprit, and without more ado dragged him before Cade, who, alarmed by the uproar, had put on his sallet, and prepared himself for some sudden onset of the citizens.

“How now! what means this bickering?” cried the rebel leader to his followers as they entered the room in disorder.

“A thief!—a thief, captain!” cried several voices.

“Ha! by St. Thomas, he’s a bold rogue!” said Cade; “let’s see him—and bid Fludd, our provost-martial, attend.”

“Go forward, sirrah, and let the captain see your ugly visage,” cried the rebels, as they thrust Hollis into the middle of the room. “There he is, my lord.”

The ruffian growled a terrible oath, and looked like a bear taken in the toils of the hunter. It was well that they had disarmed him, for if he had retained his weapon it is probable he would have attempted to cut his way through his captors.

“So,” remarked Cade, bending on the culprit a look of mingled displeasure and contempt, “you would try and bring discredit on our army, you petty lareeny rogue, you. Whence come you, and what is your name?”

“It boots not what my name may be,” replied Hollis, in a surly tone; “Jack or Tom, I must be hung, I suppose.”

“By St. Thomas of Canterbury, thou art right!” cried the leader. “What hath the knave stolen?”

“A eup of fine silver, my lord,” said the landlord; “it cost me five marks of Master Hyltoft, of the West Cheap, and has never been used but on special occasions.”

“Who is the fellow?” asked Cade: “does anybody know him?”

The rebels shook their heads, and one by one answered, “No;” when a scuffling was heard at the door, and another party entered, dragging in Roger Bragge.

“Here’s the mate of the fellow who stole the eup,” cried they. “When he saw his companion seized, he sneaked off; but we fol-

lowed and brought him back. They came here together."

Here Richard Furnival bent over and whispered in the ear of Cade,—“They’re sanctuary men from St. Martin’s; two as desperate rogues as ever cut a purse.”

“Fludd!” said Cade, and a spider-limbed and horribly sinister-looking man, in a leathern jerkin, and with a coil of ropes in his hand, stepped forward. “There’s a pair of gallows birds for thy trussing! hang them up at once.”

As soon as this sentence was pronounced, Hollis made a desperate effort to rush forward, and nearly broke from the men who held him; but, finding his struggles vain, he launched a torrent of frightful imprecations at Cade. Bragge, on the contrary, seemed overpowered by the fear of death; his usually flushed and pimpled face became livid with terror; he made an effort to speak, but his tongue refused to articulate, and his limbs trembled like those of an aged man. Suddenly his eye detected Richard Furnival, whom, as he stood with his back to the light, he did not before perceive.

“ Oh, Master Furnival,” cried the miserable man, “ save me !—save me !”

There was a buzz of astonishment at this recognition.

“ Out with thee !” cried Richard, reddening with rage and mortification ; “ out with thee, dog of the sanctuary !”

“ I am innocent !—I am innocent !” cried the poor wretch, clasping his hands in agony ; “ my sins are many, but of this I am guiltless ; have mercy !”

Richard Furnival averted his face, and Cade cried impatiently, “ Out with the rascals, and hang them from the sign of the house.”

The rebels immediately forced the culprits out of the room, amidst the cries of “ Mercy ! mercy !” from Bragge, and the oaths and imprecations of Hollis.

As they reached the street loud shouts of derision and execration greeted the doomed wretches. The rebel troops came swarming forth from the inns and houses and thronged the way, and the towns-people, alarmed by the uproar, showed their anxious countenances at the casements.

“What shall we do for a ladder?” inquired Fludd.

“There’s one under the wall of St. Margaret’s church,” cried several voices; “we’ll go and fetch it.”

“Do so,” said the executioner; “and in the mean time some of ye help me to bind these fellows.”

“If ye be Christian men,” said Bragge, in a tone of piteous supplication, “fetch me a priest;—I have much to confess.”

“You will find the priest a rare bird in these quarters,” roared a hoarse voice; “the holy fathers have crossed the water.”

“The devil snatch your craven souls!” cried Hollis to the men around him. “Give me a sword and let me die like a man, and not hang me like a dog.—I have fought under the Lord Audleye.”

“Mersey! give me but half an hour to confess,” supplicated Bragge. “I have much to say.—Your captain is banded with one who counselled me to do murder.—Give me but half an hour, for the love of the Virgin!”

“Gag the rascal! he speaks ill of our captain,” shouted a score of voices.

At this moment the men who had gone in search of the ladder appeared, and raised it against the huge beam from which the sign of the inn was suspended. A man now volunteered to assist Fludd in preparing the prisoners.

Hollis, who saw that any further resistance would be useless, ascended two or three rounds of the ladder, and looked down on the throng with a fierce and swaggering air. The rope was round his neck and trailing behind him.

“Foul ’fall ye, ye Kentish hounds!” he cried, at the top of his voice; “many of ye will soon be whipped back to your kennels, but some will by to-morrow be sent on the journey I am going. Out upon ye, ye dastardly rascals! ye would hang your own fathers to make sport for each other. I pray, your patron saint, the devil, may bring the citizens upon you ere nightfall.”

There was a burst of ribald laughter in answer to this impotent vituperation, and the

ruffian was desired to ascend higher, the executioner following him. He again looked down upon the throng below with an air of contempt, for he discovered not one among the hundreds of upturned countenances which bore an expression of pity or commiseration. Curiosity to see how so daring a fellow would demean himself in his last moments was the only feeling which animated the followers of Cade. Hollis, nevertheless, continued to abuse them.

“Ha! ye Kentish clowns!” cried he, “many of ye will come to this pass anon, and the crows will be eating your eyes on Traitors’ Gate yonder! My mother was a skipper’s wife, and taught me to mumble my prayers, but, by St. Christopher, I ha’ forgotten them all. She often swore I should die in my shoes, but here’s to prove her a liar.” With these words he kicked off both his heavy shoes into the air. One of them flew through the latticed window of the inn, and the other lighted on the head of Robin of Beaksbourne, who stood at the door to watch the mortal exit of the ruffian.

“Gra’merey, thou devil’s bird!” cried Robin ;
“but for my sallet, thou wouldst have broken
my head !”

At that moment the executioner, who had securely fastened the rope to the beam, turned the ladder, and the body of the wretched man was seen gyrating in the air, and agitated by horrible convulsions. The prolonged struggles of the miserable creature raised a cry of horror, and some of the more feeling of the rebel host called out to their comrades to shoot him, and put an end to his sufferings. Two bows were instantly bent, and a couple of arrows, hastily discharged, went whistling over the heads of the crowd. One of them missed its object, but the other was buried deep in the breast of the criminal, whose life it terminated in a moment. The arrow, shot upward, had pierced the body at about an angle of forty degrees, and the heart’s blood of the sufferer, trickling down the shaft, dyed the feather with which it was winged, and dripped on the heads of those below. Bragge cast a look of horror at his fellow-criminal and fainted.

By the help of strong waters Bragge was restored to consciousness, and in five minutes more he was preceding the executioner up the ladder, the very personification of abject misery. He no longer uttered complaints, but appeared in a kind of stupor, from which the tying of the cord to the beam, and the sight of the dead body of his comrade, were now not sufficient to rouse him. His pinioned arms just allowed him to clasp his hands together, as if in supplication, and as he did so the executioner nimbly thrust him from the ladder, and, leaping on the culprit, sat upon his shoulders to increase the weight. There was a buzz of savage admiration at this feat, and some of the rebels applauded Fludd for his dexterity.

The High Street at this moment presented such a picture as Callot loved to delineate. At the north end were the gate and towers of London Bridge; at the south rose the spire of St. Margaret's church, a building which has long since been swept away by modern improvement. In the street was a dense throng of men variously armed, while high

above them, in the full blaze of the meridian sun, hung the bodies of the two malefactors, with the executioner perched like a carrion crow upon the shoulders of one of them. A few pale and horror-stricken countenances were gazing on the appalling scene from the upper windows of the houses.



CHAPTER V.

THE RETURN.—THE RESCUE.

WHILE the wild scene described in the preceding chapter was enacting, the city itself presented a picture of bustle and confusion. The gates were closed and the guard doubled; chains were drawn across the streets, and armed men were seen on the walls busily engaged in the inspection of the cannon and bombards. The same activity was observable on the battlements of the Tower, which were crowded with the soldiers of that garrison. The Jews and the merchant-strangers had hidden their most valuable effects, in anticipation of the sacking of their houses, and the sanctuary of St. Martin's was swarming like a hive. The pusillanimous conduct of the king

and his court had provoked and enraged the citizens, and if the Duke of York had made his appearance at the gates of London at this time, there is little doubt that he might have entered without opposition; but the citizens, especially the more wealthy, justly dreaded the entrance of the daring rebel whose forces now occupied Southwark. A common council had met at the Guildhall, and the propriety of admitting Cade had been warmly discussed. Among those who inveighed against the impolicy of suffering the rebel forces to enter the city was Robert Horne, alderman and stockfishmonger; but the emissaries of Cade had alarmed the more timid of the citizens, and this, together with the credit which that wily villain had obtained among the lower orders by his affectation of a strict love of justice, combined to render nugatory everything that could be urged against such a step, and it was in the end agreed that the rebels should be admitted.

While the rebel army were threading the narrow streets on their way to the Guildhall,

a vessel, which on the previous day had sailed from the coast of France, anchored in the Thames off the Tower. A young man, gallantly attired, and with gilt spurs on his heels, was hurriedly pacing the deck, and as soon as the vessel was secured, he hailed a waterman, who landed him at the Tower-stairs, when he proceeded at once to the gate of the fortress and desired admittance, stating that he was the bearer of letters to the Lord Scales. Scarcely an hour elapsed, when the sentinels saw him ride forth, on a spirited horse, in the direction of the city. He passed through Thames Street at a round trot, turned up Dowgate Hill, and, entering the narrow thoroughfare of Watling Street, reached St. Paul's Churchyard, and, descending the hill, was challenged by the sentinels at Ludgate. The stranger bent over his horse's neck, and whispered the pass-word in the soldier's ear, when the gate was thrown open. In a few minutes more, he was ringing, with a heightened colour and fluttering heart, the bell at the gate of the house of the deceased merchant, John Furnival.

“Ha! Thomas!” said the stranger, in a voice familiar to the aged domestic who opened the gate.

“The blessed Virgin shield us!” cried the old man, staring at the stranger, “it is his spirit!”

“No such thing, old friend,” said the stranger, patting him on the shoulder; “I am flesh and blood, like thyself.”

The old man raised his eyes and looked on the noble features of the speaker, which, though sun-burnt and travel-worn, he had quickly recognised.

“Dear—dear Master Valentine,” he cried, grasping his hand and pressing it affectionately, “I thought thee dead.” Then, falling on his knees, he clasped the legs of the young man, and wept like an infant for very joy.

Valentine was much affected by this exhibition of feeling, and, raising the old man from the ground, entered the house.

“Calm thyself, good Thomas,” said he; “and let me see my honoured foster-father and my dear Anna.”

He paused; for he perceived an expression of sadness immediately cloud the aged features of the domestic.

In a few words, and with a voice almost overpowered by emotion, the whole of the events of the last few months were described by the old man.

Valentine listened to the recital with a bursting heart; then, throwing himself into a chair, he gave vent to his feelings by a passionate flood of tears. In the extremity of his grief, he madly implored Heaven to end a life which had become insupportable. All he loved in the world was lost to him: the good man who had watched over him in his childhood was in his grave, and his beloved Anna in the living tomb of the cloister. A thousand times he wished that his life had been sacrificed in some one of the hard encounters of his French campaign.

Poor Valentine! the bright visions which had haunted him, sleeping or waking, during his absence from England, and nerved his arm in battle against the foeman, were now changed

for gloom and sorrow. He looked down listlessly at the gilt spurs on his heels, for he had been dubbed a knight on the field, and was now Sir Valentine ; but they only reminded him of the bitterness of his lot, and that she, for whose sake alone he had earned them, was now for ever lost to him.

With such feelings did Sir Valentine remount his horse and leave the house which had once been his home. He returned through Ludgate, and, entering Watling Street, reached Cannon, or, as it was then called, Candlewick, Street. On arriving at the eastern extremity of that thoroughfare, he perceived that it was occupied by a large body of men variously armed. Perceiving his danger, but, judging it safest to assume a bold face, he attempted to pass through the throng. This, however, was not permitted ; the followers of Cade, for such they were, closed around him, and, while several hands grasped his bridle, a brown bill was thrust in his face, and he was ordered to dismount.

Seeing that resistance would have pro-

voked these men, Valentine obeyed their bidding. As he leaped from his horse, they immediately closed around him, and one of them attempted to deprive him of his sword. This, however, was too great an indignity for a belted knight to submit to, and Valentine, irritated at the man's boldness, clenched his fist and discharged such a blow in the fellow's face that it sent him sprawling on the ground.

A loud outcry was raised among the rebels at this treatment of one of their band, and about a dozen swords and daggers gleamed in the air, while a score of voices cried "Cut the popinjay in pieces !"

"By your leave, comrades, not so," said Robin of Beaksbourne, pushing his way through the crowd, and standing between Valentine and the threatening rebels. "This must not be ; our captain hath strictly enjoined peace until we have received further orders."

The conclusion of this remark was uttered in a significant under tone.

"I'll have my fling at him, an' I die for it," cried the stricken rebel, clutching his dudgeon

dagger. "Be Englishmen to be beaten like dogs?"

"Stand back, sirrah, stand back!" said Robin, sternly, and shouldering as he spoke that enormous axe already described; "I'll cleave to the brisket the first man who stirs to touch him."

The threatening aspect and powerful voice of the giant had the desired effect, and the rebels formed a circle round Robin of Beakbourne and their prisoner, who was then interrogated.

"Who are you, young sir?" said Robin.

"A knight, as thou seest," was Valentine's reply, glancing, as he spoke, at his gilt spurs.

"Whither art thou wending?" was the next question.

"To the Tower."

"Humph!" said Robin, tapping with his foot, and looking somewhat perplexed. "Is your company there?"

"No!" replied Valentine, laconically.

"Then what is thy business at the Tower?"

“ That is a question for thy betters,” replied Valentine, haughtily,

“ Ha ! ha !—is it so ?” said the giant rebel, grinning savagely as he spoke. “ Dost thou know that I have the power to hang thee, for all thy gilt spurs ? ”

A scornful reply rose to the young knight’s lips, but he checked its utterance. “ That would be a bold act,” said he ; “ but it would gain thee no credit, and might work thee harm. Who is your captain ? ”

“ Our captain is the Lord Mortimer,” replied Robin ; “ and were he here, he would hang thee for half the words thou hast uttered.”

At that moment there was a stir among the crowd, and a man, wearing a rich suit of armour, but with a small red cap instead of a helmet, advanced towards Robin and the prisoner, but, suddenly stopping, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, which caused Valentine to turn his head.

“ Mother of God ! ” exclaimed the young knight,—“ my hour is come !—It is my mortal enemy ! ”

He spoke truly. It was Richard Furnival, who, hearing the uproar consequent on Valentine's capture, had issued from one of the houses in the neighbourhood, whither he had repaired for refreshment.

Though time had effected some change in the prisoner's appearance, a single glance sufficed to show Richard Furnival that his hated foster-brother stood near him. With a smile of the deadliest malice, Richard beckoned to Robin of Beaksbourne, and they conversed apart for some minutes. Valentine could not hear that conversation, but he knew too well the subject of it. Richard never looked towards him, but his gesticulations were violent, and appeared to be in reply to some remonstrance of the gigantic rebel. At length the conference ended: Richard Furnival plunged into the thickest of the crowd, and Robin of Beaksbourne returned to the young knight.

"Well," said he, in a serious tone, "you are out of favour with fortune, young sir. I wished to save you, though you flouted me; but it must not be. So you must prepare

yourself to be hung forthwith. I am sorry that there is no priest nigh to receive your shrift."

Valentine scarcely heard the concluding part of his sentence. A confused noise filled his ears, his temples throbbed wildly, and a mist obscured his sight. He would have courted death on the battle-field, but to be hung like a felon was horrible,—the thought paralysed his limbs and closed up his lips, and he would have fallen to the ground had not Robin of Beaksbourne supported him.

"Courage!—take heart, sir," said the giant, as Valentine recovered his senses; "'twill soon be over."

"I care not for my life," said Valentine, in a tone of dejection which he endeavoured in vain to master, "but I would not be hung like a dog. Let one of your fellows smite off my head."

"That cannot be, Sir Knight," said Robin of Beaksbourne; "my orders are to *hang* thee, and it must be done eftsoons."

"If ye be Christian men?" cried Valentine,

raising his voice, "smite off my head, but do not hang me like a thief or a cut-throat!"

"*I* would take off thy head for thee with a will," said the fellow whom Valentine had knocked down. "I whipped off the tanner's at Bermondsey with a single blow."

"Then come hither and do that office for me," said Valentine, taking a half noble from his pouch, and tossing it to the fellow; "thou wilt then have thy revenge and be doing me a service. There's thy guerdon."

"Stand back, Will!" cried Robin of Beakshourne; "stand back, and let Reuben Pilcher come hither. Pity the captain's got Fludd with him to hang the stockfishmonger; he'd have done the job better."

A man now came out of the crowd with a coil of rope in his hand, and advanced towards the young knight; but, ere he had thrown the cord around Valentine's neck, a troop of horsemen came dashing along Eastcheap, headed by an athletic man in the elegant armour of the period. They had been to relieve the guard at Castle Baynard, under the inspection of

Matthew Gough, a brave Welsh captain then quartered in the Tower, who had determined to visit the different posts himself. The rebels, seeing the advance of the troop, scrambled out of the way, and each man looked to his arms. Gough's quick eye soon discovered Sir Valentine among them, and advancing boldly to the spot where he stood, he demanded why he was thus surrounded. Valentine, in a few hasty words, described his critical situation.

"Got's plessed life!" exclaimed the choleric old Welshman, "hang my young friend! such pase grooms as these hang a pelted knight! It is treasons!"

"You must be wary," whispered Valentine; "they are in strong force here."

Gough made a signal to two of his troop, who instantly set off at full gallop to the Tower, and Robin of Beaksbourne conversed apart with his followers. It was a critical moment, and the rebels seemed to be weighing the chances of resistance to the demand of the Welsh captain, who however was a man dangerous to trifle with. Nevertheless, they

seemed half inclined to dispute the possession of their prisoner, when Robin addressed them. He reminded them that their leader had strictly forbidden any bickering in the city under penalty of the severest punishment, and that though they might succeed in keeping possession of the young knight, it could only be at the expense of a score of their lives, for Gough's troop was well armed and mounted, and he had moreover, as they rightly conjectured, sent an express to the Tower for a reinforcement, in case of need. Without, therefore, consulting Richard Furnival, Robin permitted Sir Valentine to remount his horse and accompany Gough to the Tower.

"Py our lady," said the brave old Welshman, as they rode along, "'twas lucky I came to your rescue, for they would have hanged you like a dog, sir. These rude clowns are the very scum o' the earth, and should be taught to respect their petters. If the citizens had the heart of a mouse they'd be upon them in a paternoster. Would I had the cutting up o' the dogs for a single hour."

“I would gladly help you at the carving,” said Valentine; “I would be your *ecuyer tranchant*, if it were only in return for your having delivered me out of the hands of the Philistines.”

“It may come to that, after all,” rejoined Gough. “The alderman of Castle Baynard says he could muster a company, and that he has a hundred and sixty prown pills in the church which he would put in the hands of that number of men, if his prother justices would pluck up heart enough to fall on these mongrels.”

“I pray God they may do so,” continued Valentine, “and then I shall fight by your side, captain.”

“Py our Lady!” exclaimed the captain, “spoken like a prave knight and a stout soldier. Put here is the Tower.”

Entering the massive outer gate, Valentine proceeded to the captain’s quarters with an aching heart, yet inwardly blessing the saints, who had snatched him from the clutches of his deadly enemy and preserved him from an ignominious death.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "VOX POPULI."

"I PRAY God this fierce rebel may leave us," ejaculated Master Hyltoft, suddenly awaking from the long reverie in which he had been indulging as he sat at breakfast with his daughter; "for if he stay another day he'll sack the city."

"I hope not, dear father," said Johanna, ceasing to caress her favourite dog, and anxiously regarding her parent's perturbed countenance.

"I mistrust him, wench; I mistrust him: he is a wily knave, and will throw off his vizard ere he leaves the city. He sacked Malpas' house yesterday, and would have murdered him to boot, but for the intercession of his

friends. Ah, well-a-day ! 'tis a grievous blow to us all. He will be here again to-day to condemn the Lord Say, whom he swears he will drag from the Tower and put to death. Heaven knows what we Londoners shall come to at last, for we get more chicken-hearted every year. Oh, for the days of our Fourth Harry, who, in the year of redemption one thousand four hundred, and when the rebel lords purposed killing him at Oxford, came post to London and assembled, at the third cockerow, ten thousand fighting men within our walls ! ”

“ 'Tis ever so with the old folk,” thought Johanna ; “ they are always talking of *their* brave days.”

“ I shall go to the Guildhall, child,” continued the goldsmith, “ and see how this graceless losel demeans himself before his betters.”

“ Have a care of yourself, dear father,” said Johanna.

“ Never fear me, child, never fear me,” continued the old citizen, rising from his seat. “ O that I were some twenty years younger ! ”

“Why so, good master Hyltoft?” said young William Farendon, entering the room. “You are a hale man yet, and have twenty years to live. How does my little sweetheart?”

This interrogatory was accompanied by a hearty smack on the cheek, which Mistress Johanna received with the air of a spoilt child.

“William Farendon,” said the goldsmith, “wilt thou go with me to the Guildhall this morning, and hear what this rebel captain hath to propose?”

“Ay,” replied the young man, “I will go with you willingly; and if I could see the mayor, I would counsel him to order the citizens to get to harness and fall on the rebel rout, who, I am persuaded, would flee before the assault of true men.”

“Faith, I believe thee, William,” said Master Hyltoft; “thou art of my mind. I was wishing for the thews and sinews of my youth when you came in, that I might head a company against them. This day will not pass away without some bloody pastime, I fear.”

“They say Cade has grown bold and pre-

sumptuous with his success, and that he meditates more mischief," observed Farendon.

"I doubt it not," rejoined the goldsmith; "would we could muster a force to drive him into Southwark."

"That we will do, with God's blessing," said the young man in a determined tone. "We have been reviewing our force, and find we could muster already nearly fifteen hundred men, who, if they would stand to their tackling, might keep the bridge against Jack and his followers. Then we shall have all the foreigners with us; for though they dared not deny him the things he demanded of them by his rascal agent, Cock, they would rejoice to see him hung. Let's see (he here drew a piece of paper from his bosom) what arms and harness we have. The mass-priest of St. Antholin's can lend us two suits of harness which belonged to his two nephews who were drowned at Queenhithe last summer, and he has sixty bills in the church. In the church of St. Bennet Sherehog are fifty bills; in St. Catherine Cree a like number, besides a few morris-pikes; and there are arms for about five

hundred footmen in the church of St. James, Garlick Hill ; St. Martin, Ironmonger Lane ; St. Nicholas Acon, and the hall of our company. Then there 's Captain Peyntwyn's company of arbalisters at Castle Baynard, and —— ”

“ Enough, enough, William Farendon,” interrupted the goldsmith. “ With such a company we may at least prevent their coming again into the city. Ah, I well remember the day when the bishop's men tried to force the passage of the bridge: it was in the year one thousand four hundred and twenty-six ; and I and a stout band of 'prentices gave the foremost of them, who were battering the gates, such a flight of grey goose shafts, that they were fain to withdraw into Southwark.”

“ I have devised it that when Cade leaves the city, the bell shall ring to folk-mote, at Paul's Cross ; but we must first get the consent of the mayor,” said the young man.

“ 'Tis well ordered,” observed Master Hyltoft ; “ and now let 's hie to the Guildhall and see the worshipful the mayor.”

“ If we cannot see him, we must get the ear

of the sheriffs," said William Farendon, as he quitted the house with his friend and future father-in-law.

As they gained the street, they perceived that the further end of the Cheap was already occupied by the followers of Cade, who was then about to enter the Guildhall. The two citizens, threading the narrow streets and lanes which led out of the principal thoroughfare, avoided the crowd, and soon reached Guildhall, but they experienced considerable difficulty in entering the building, before which many hundreds of Cade's followers were congregated, some of them by turns abusing or deriding the small band of men in the city livery, who kept the door.

They found the hall crammed to suffocation, and resounding with the shouts and execrations of the rebels and the city rabble. On the dais, at the eastern end, was a group, the principal personages of which the goldsmith and his companion found no difficulty in identifying. There was the mayor, Sir Thomas Chalton, and the sheriffs, Hulyn and Canynge, ac-

accompanied by their officers and about a score of the sergeants-at-arms. Opposite to them stood Richard Furnival, in his elegant suit of armour, a good looking stripling holding his helmet, while he conversed with Robert Poynings, who, leaning on his two-handed sword, seemed to be more attentive to what was passing than to the observations of his associate. But the chief characters were the audacious rebel Cade, and his prisoner, the Lord Say, a man of venerable aspect and noble bearing.

So much noise and confusion prevailed in the hall that not a word of what was passing on the dais could be heard by those who stood below; but the attitude and the violent gesticulations of the arch-rebel were sufficiently significant to be comprehended by all who saw them.

“Mass!” exclaimed William Farendon, in a whisper to his friend; “see how the base-born rascal shakes his fist at his noble prisoner. Alas! is there no spirit left among the citizens?”

“Whist!—whist!” replied the old goldsmith; “you will be heard anon,—bridle your

tongue, for there are twenty pair of eyes already watching us."

Master Hyltoft spoke truly ; both he and his companion had already attracted the attention of the men by whom they were surrounded, and, had any of this conversation been overheard, it might possibly have cost them their lives.

As it was, they appeared to be desirous of knowing who the new-comers really were, but, ere they could satisfy themselves, the noise in the hall was redoubled, and Cade, suddenly grasping the arm of Lord Say, thrust him violently forward to the front of the dais, and said something to his followers which was only audible to those immediately beneath. The gesture, however, with which it was accompanied was understood by every one, for hideous yells and execrations rose from the rebels and ascended to the lofty roof, which rang with the deafening clamour.

" Away with him ! " cried a voice, " and hang him in his girdle."

“ Cut off his head, and send it to his friend the Dauphin,” roared another.

“ Away with the traitor !—death !—death !” shouted a hundred voices, and various weapons flashed threateningly above the heads of the throng.

The mayor here advanced, and spoke to Cade, who shook his head and looked menacingly ; then, giving a signal to his followers, several of them ascended the dais and laid hands on the unhappy nobleman, whom they dragged below. The uproar was now redoubled, and loud cries of vengeance were reiterated by the savage throng, who dragged, or rather carried, their prisoner out of the hall.

“ Holy Virgin !” muttered the goldsmith, “ they will murder him. Let’s be gone, William Farendon ; there’s no safety among these bloodhounds.”

With great difficulty the two citizens succeeded in elbowing their way through the throng, and quitted the hall. They found the streets filled with the rabble, and the followers

of Cade, and a great crowd was moving towards the Cheap, bearing with them their unhappy victim, whom they had nearly stripped of his apparel.

“It ’s bootless appealing to the mayor,” said Farendon ; “you see, though he interceded for the poor lord’s life, he quailed at the threatening posture of the arch-rebel. We are doomed, Master Hyltoft, and every man may go home and make his shrift ; for this robber will plunder and murder us all ere he have done.”

“May God defeat his wicked designs !” ejaculated the goldsmith, with a shudder. “My mind misgives me, William : we have not seen the end of it yet.”

“I fear not,” said the young man. “O for a few stout hearts to fall on this rascal rout—this Kentish scum !”

“Our citizens are panic-stricken,” observed Master Hyltoft, “and are marked for the slaughter. Let ’s home, and each look to his own house.”

“Ay, do so, sir,” returned William Farendon; “and I’ll hie to Master Basing, who will lead the ’prentices.”

With these remarks, the two friends quickened their pace, and in a few minutes reached the house of Master Hyltoft.

CHAPTER VII.

CADE VISITS MASTER HYLTOFT.

WILLIAM FARENDON parted from his friend, more determined than ever to make some effort to clear the city of the desperate band that now held possession of it. The scene he had just witnessed had convinced him that the lives and properties of his fellow-citizens were entirely at the mercy of a horde of lawless men, who were only waiting for a signal from their leader to commence a general pillage of all who had anything to lose.

With these reflections and intentions, he repaired to several of his friends, and, having obtained their promises of assistance, he proceeded to arrange his plans for resisting the rebels at all hazards. He had the satisfactio

of finding that the violent conduct of Cade had already caused many of those who had at first espoused his cause to suspect his ultimate intentions. “Y^e honest and thryfty commoners,” says the chronicler, “caste in their myndes y^e sequele of this matyer, and feryd leste they shuld be delt with in lyke maner.”

The young goldsmith, wherever he went, now heard suppressed murmurings against Cade and his followers, and many forebodings as to their further proceeding ; and having, at a late hour of the day, obtained an interview with the lord mayor, he was rejoiced to find that officer, as well as the sheriffs, had resolved to oppose the entrance of the rebel host on the morrow, and had actually communicated privately with the Lord Scales, in the Tower, who had promised his assistance.

The citizens, horrified at the brutal murder of Lord Say, and disgusted with the exhibition of the head of the unfortunate nobleman,—placed on a pike and paraded through their principal thoroughfares,—were at length roused to a sense of their danger.

The dastardly flight of the weak-minded king, and the suspicion entertained by many of the designs of the Duke of York, had led the Londoners, while they anticipated a civil war, to believe that the partisans of either side would respect their property ; but in Cade they saw only a needy, low-bred, and sanguinary rebel, whose sole motives of action, like those which influence all demagogues, were, a low love of fame and a hatred of all that is orderly and respectable. The hours of Cade's rule in the city of London were accordingly numbered.

Master Hyltoft entered his house with direful misgivings of some impending mischief. There are times when a kind of instinct gives to man a warning of coming danger, and bids him prepare to meet or avert it. The goldsmith knew that he was reported one of the richest of his calling between the Old 'Change and the Poultry ; that the sanctuary folk in the unhallowed precincts of St. Martin's owed him no good will for his occasional inquisitorial visits in that quarter, and that many of these desperate men, considering law was now at an

end in the city, were following in the rebel train, and urging them to havoc and plunder. Cade, after the murder of Lord Say, at the Standard in the Cheap, marched with his host to Mile End, where he was met by the Essex rebels, who, hearing of the success of their brethren on the opposite side of the Thames, had taken up arms and marched towards London.

Master Hyoltoft saw that the storm was gathering ; and, anticipating that, on the return of the rebels with a reinforcement, there would be a repetition of the scenes of the preceding days, he proceeded to secrete his most valuable effects, confiding in the honesty of his tried servants. Of all the goldsmiths in the Cheap he had certainly the most to dread, for his nephew and his would-be son-in-law were banded with the leader of the rebellion ; and the former was constantly in attendance upon him. With these dismal forebodings, the goldsmith betook himself, with his daughter, to the upper rooms of the house, after having caused the outer gate to be closed, and carefully bolted and barred.

There was a death-like silence in the streets, interrupted only by the cawing of the rooks in the elms near the cathedral of St. Paul, and the shrill cries of the jackdaws in the tower of Bow Church. Now and then a citizen would pass hastily along the Cheap, and, as he met a friend or neighbour, would shake his head significantly and shuffle on his way. There was something portentous in this unnatural calm in the very heart of the city; and it boded no good to the rebel army.

While the goldsmith sat brooding on the probable finale of the day, a distant noise disturbed his reverie. He walked to the casement, which projected several feet over the footway, and afforded him a good view of the Cheap from one end to the other; but scarcely a soul was to be seen abroad, and nearly every shop and stall was closed. Opening a window, he listened for a moment, and plainly heard the sound of the rebel drums. A bitter curse escaped the lips of the old citizen as the noise reached his ears, and he paced up and down the room imploring the Saints to hurl destruction upon the

disturbers of the peace of the city. The noise each moment came nearer and nearer, and at length was mingled with wild shouts and tumultuous outbursts of merriment.

The goldsmith looked again from the window, and then saw that the Poultry was filled by a column of men, ten or twelve abreast, preceded by their leader and his friends on horseback. In front of the column, elevated on long staves, high above the various weapons which flashed over the heads of the throng, were two objects, which the citizens from the windows were regarding with horror and consternation. They were the heads of the Lord Say, and his son-in-law, Sir James Cromer, whom the rebels had slain and beheaded on the way to Mile End. As the rebel army advanced up the Cheap, the men who bore these ghastly relics held them together for a moment, "and caused," as the chronicler Fabian hath it, "eyther deed mouth to kysse other dynerse and many tymes."

"Jesu save us!" ejaculated the goldsmith, as he beheld this dismal sight; "they will make the Cheap a shambles ere curfew."

Here Johanna, who had been regarding her parent in silence, advanced and spoke:—

“Dearest father,” said she, “you vex yourself needlessly: these men will leave us now they have revenged themselves on their supposed enemies.”

“Go to, wench!” muttered the old citizen, angrily, “you know nothing of the matter; we shall all be robbed, and, peradventure, some of our throats cut.”

“Holy Virgin!” exclaimed the girl, “you will drive me distraught, father, with these dismal forebodings. Why, William Farendon says, there is nothing to fear, and that he and his friends mean to set upon them if they attempt to take too much upon themselves.”

“Then William Farendon is a fool to make thee acquainted with his intentions,” said the goldsmith. “If it should reach the ear of Cade, he will have him to the standard and head him.”

During this dialogue the rebel forces were advancing up the Cheap, and were now within a few yards of the goldsmith’s house, when a

loud and prolonged flourish of their drums cut short his reply to his daughter, and caused him to look again from the window, when, oh ! what a sight met his view ! There was Cade, in his handsome brigandine and skull-cap, attended, on his right by Robert Poynings, in half armour, bearing a sword of state, and on his left by a young man in an elegant suit of complete armour. The beaver of the latter was raised, and the goldsmith, at a glance, saw beneath it the pert but handsome features of Richard Furnival.

“ God be merciful to us ! ” exclaimed the old citizen,—“ here ’s the arch traitor, attended by my sister’s son and the heir of my old friend and gossip, Furnival, come to despoil me of my goods and merchandise ! ”

“ What ! Richard Furnival and Poynings ! ” cried Johanna, running to the window.

“ Stand back, girl,” said her father sternly : “ stand back from the window : this is not fitting company for a maiden.” Then, talking aloud to himself, he continued :—“ Ah ! there ’s another head ! Whose can that be ?

Fagh ! those ragged rogues seem to be proud of their grisly burthens. So, they 're looking this way—Poynings talks aside to Cade. He 's counselling him to rob me. Ha ! villain ! thy head was made to garnish Traitor's Gate, and if thou sufferest him to come here, I pray heaven it may soon be there."

The house of Master Hyltoft was one of those dwellings of merchants of the middle ages, of which few perfect specimens remain in this country, built as much as possible for security against any sudden attack of a lawless mob, in the not unfrequent tumults of the period. You entered by a gateway or "*porte cochere*," which was immediately closed in times of danger. The court-yard, or enclosed area within, was a convenient place for the unloading of merchandise, or for the concealing a troop of armed men, while the apartments above communicated with each other by galleries of wood-work, running round the outside, in the manner of some of our inns at the present day ; the kitchens, stables, warehouses, and other offices being below.

It has been already observed that Master Hyltoft had secreted some of his most valuable effects. His vessels of gold and silver were carefully sunk in the well in the court-yard. Upon these a truss of straw was let down ; and then a few baskets of stones formed a false bottom, which no hasty inspection or examination could detect. Other objects he had secretly removed to the hall of his Company, wisely judging that Cade would, at any rate, attack that last. Still, enough remained in his house to excite the cupidity of such as were now before it.

As the goldsmith watched the rebel host from his window, he saw Cade summons one of his followers to his side ; and immediately afterwards the rebel made the great iron-studded gate ring with the butt-end of his brown bill.

“ The old fox is asleep, or gone on a journey,” said Cade, after a pause. “ Try again. Will.”

The man renewed his thumping, but the gate remained unopened, and no one appeared to stir within the house.

“ Shall we beat in the gate, captain ? ” inquired several voices.

“ Humph ! ” said Cade, turning to Poynings ;
“ what does this mean ? ”

“ There used to be a bell on the outside of that gate,” remarked Richard Furnival.

“ Let them knock again,” said Poynings :
“ my kinsman and his man may be busy at the furnace, and may not have heard the summons.”

The knocking was renewed ; and in the midst of it Daniel, the goldsmith’s deaf man, gently unbolted the gate, and opening one half of it, looked out with a vacant stare. He certainly acted to perfection the part his master had taught him ; but it was all in vain, the unwelcome visitors were not to be put off with any subterfuge of the sort : leaping from their horses, Cade, Poynings, and Richard Furnival advanced, and, pushing open the gate, stalked boldly into the court-yard.

“ How now ! ” cried the rebel leader, in an angry tone ; “ are we received like some beggarly Genoese, or Florentine, or such-like fo-

reign popinjays?" Then, addressing the serving-man: "Where is thy master, sirrah?"

Daniel, who was as deaf as a beetle, understood not a word; but he saw Cade's lips move, his angry gesture, and his lowering brow, and believing that the inquiry had reference to the goldsmith's property, he scratched his head, and replied, in the tone of voice peculiar to persons afflicted with deafness—"Can't tell ye, sir—my lord—it 's gone to the hall of the guild."

"What does he say?" inquired Cade, turning to Poynings, "is your kinsman, the goldsmith, from home?"

"No," replied Poynings, "he misunderstands the question; and, supposing you are come for his master's goods and chattles, says, they are all sent to the hall of his Company."

"This will not avail," said Cade, in a determined tone. "Out of the way, sirrah!" And giving the serving-man a smart blow with his riding-staff, he strode into the house, followed by his friends.

"Serves thee right, thou deaf adder!" said Richard Furnival, with a grin, as he passed

the poor domestic, who was writhing from the effects of the blow.

The goldsmith beheld this from an upper window of the house, which looked into the court-yard, and deeming it unsafe to continue any longer in the rear, he descended to meet his unwelcome guests, who he found had taken up their quarters in the great hall in which dinner was usually served. Cade had seated himself in the old citizen's arm-chair, Poynings had ensconced himself in another, and Richard Furnival was seated on the huge oak table, upon which he had placed his helmet, while he whistled and examined the ceiling with an air of affected impudence. The goldsmith took no heed of Poynings and Furnival, but, advancing towards Cade, dressed his ancient features in a grim smile, which savoured of anything but of welcome.

“ Save you, sir captain,” said he ; “ what can my poor abode furnish your valour ? ”

“ I' faith, I scarcely know,” replied the arch rebel, with a chuckle, “ but trusty Master Poynings of the Gleen, there, speaks well of his

uncle's riches, and saith, he hath a liberal hand."

Master Hyltoft's countenance fell at these words; and he sincerely wished his nephew in that place which is said to be paved with good intentions; but prudence forbade him to give vent to his indignation at the infamous treachery of Poynings, and he replied—

"Alas, sir captain! my nephew does but banter you."

"Not a wit; not a wit," replied Cade laughing. "It's all true. You goldsmiths are very Jews for riches, and can therefore bestow a little on needy men. Now, the poor commons who are with us are beginning to grow faint for lack of a little encouragement. You must not therefore murmur at a trifling subsidy. The goldsmiths of the West Cheap can well afford it. And I promise you and them, on the faith of a Mortimer, that what is advanced shall be repaid in due season."

The old citizen attempted to put in a word at this juncture, but it stuck in his throat, and Cade continued—

“We are in arms for the public weal—let our intentions be judged of by our acts—and he who refuses to assist in the good work is an enemy to the commonwealth.”

“Of your intentions,” thought the goldsmith, “we have already seen a sample at the houses of Malpas and Gherstis. Mine, I ween, is to be the third.”

Cade guessed what was passing in the mind of the old citizen, but he had resolved to try gentle means first, not wishing to deal more harshly than was necessary for his purpose with the member of a powerful fraternity.

“Well,” said the rebel leader, “are you disposed to grant this very moderate request?”

“I wot not whether it may be in my power, sir,” replied Master Hyltoft, with a rueful expression of countenance.

“Pshaw!” cried Cade, “it is nothing to men of your substance. To tell you plainly, we want two hundred marks of gold.”

Now, the old citizen knew very well that this sum was wanted of him alone, though it was pretended to be a tax on the whole of his guild.

but, affecting to understand it in the latter sense, he replied—

“I marvel, sir captain, if I shall compass this sum among the brethren of our craft.”

“Tut, tut,” said Cade, with a sneer; “you will find it us *to-day*, and can collect the sum among your fraternity at your leisure.”

Master Hyoltoft well nigh swooned on hearing this monstrous proposition. He plainly perceived that Cade was determined to extort from him as much as he could obtain, and he ejaculated in a faltering voice—

“It is impossible, sir captain!”

“So all of you would say, if asked one by one,” observed Cade fiercely; “but the money must be found; and look not to deceive us.”

“I have not even a hundred marks,” said the goldsmith, in a tone of distress.

“Then you must raise the sum we want in goldsmith’s work,” cried the rebel leader, starting up from his seat and scowling savagely on the old citizen.

Master Hyoltoft groaned in anguish, and turned to enlist the sympathies of his kinsman and

the graceless youth who had aspired to his daughter's hand.

“Poynings,” said he; “Richard Furnival—tell the Captain”——

He paused, as he saw Richard shuffle from the table and walk to the other end of the hall, while Poynings suddenly became interested with the oak carvings above the fire-place.

“God help me!” exclaimed the goldsmith.
“I am a ruined man!”

“Ay, by St. Thomas of Canterbury!” exclaimed Cade fiercely; “you *will* be ruined, master goldsmith, and that right speedily, if you delay to furnish the sum we want. Just look from the window, and tell me, if you think those men without are to be cozened with fair speeches. I have but to give the word, and they would help themselves, and spoil you in a trice.”

The goldsmith, in his despair, did look from the window, and saw the crowd of rebels without, standing like hounds impatient to be loosened from the leash. Then his eye wandered again to Poynings and Furnival; but

they averted their heads, and seemed unwilling to meet his glance.

“Alas ! alas !” cried he ; “ am I alone to be taxed thus ? I cannot—I will not submit to be plundered.”

“Ha ! ha !” exclaimed Cade, grinding his teeth with rage. “We shall soon find meat for your high stomach, sir goldsmith.” And, darting to the window, he opened the casement and cried aloud, “*Haroc !*”

The signal was answered by a loud shout from without, and the rebels in a body rushed to the gateway, literally crowding over each other. The goldsmith’s blood froze in his veins as he heard them, in a tumultuous manner, enter his dwelling. Another moment, and all would have been lost ; when Poynings suddenly approached Cade, and whispered something in his ear. Cade nodded assent ; and Poynings then advanced to his uncle, and, in a hasty and stifled tone, warned him of his danger, hinting that they might end by hanging him from the front of his house.

Master Hyltoft cast a glance of mingled sor-

row, indignation and contempt at his unworthy nephew, and in a faltering voice said, "I consent."

"Hold awhile, but wait without," said Cade to Robin of Beaksbourne, who stood in the doorway with his party, ready to fall on their prey.

Robin disappeared with his men ; and Master Hyltoft, like a man performing a painful and disagreeable penance, ascended to an upper room to fetch the money demanded of him.

"Corpus Domini !" cried Cade ; "I thought the old fool would have driven us to use extremities. You were right, Poynings ; he hath plenty to spare."

Poynings replied only by one of his sinister smiles, and Cade continued:—"Old Blount must be the next : they say he's the richest man of his guild."

"You will find his five sons in the way," remarked Poynings. "I hear they are all at home, and are very Hectors ; they may bring the citizens upon us."

Richard Furnival remained silent during this dialogue. The fact was, that he felt somewhat

uneasy at the scene he had witnessed. He certainly had some regard for Johanna Hyltoft, notwithstanding his careless and indifferent behaviour ; and he very naturally concluded, that the part he had acted this day was anything but calculated to raise him in the estimation of her father. In the mean time the goldsmith returned, bearing a bag of nobles, which he placed, with a sigh, on the table.

“ There,” said he sorrowfully, the tears starting to his eyes ; “ there is the fruit of twenty years’ honest labour, captain. There are two hundred and fifty Harry nobles, which I have saved as a portion for my only child. Will not less than two hundred of them suffice ? ”

“ Bravely done, old sir ! ” cried Cade, snatching up the bag ; “ bravely done ! ’twill serve us better than two hundred. It shall be returned to you with interest when the times are mended. Here, Robin ! ”

Robin of Beaksbourne entered, and received the bag from the hands of his leader, amidst the protestations and entreaties of the old citizen.

“Have a care of it, said Cade. “We hold thee accountable for every piece it contains. Come, Poynings, let’s to Southwark, where we’ll sup, and order matters for the morrow.”

With these words, the audacious rebel quitted the house of Master Hyltoft, and joined his followers, leaving the plundered old citizen in a frenzy of grief at his serious loss.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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